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Perception of Second Semester Beginner-Level French Students Using the Chez Nous Video

by

Bibi Nazia Begum Karamuth

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Abstract

This paper reports a survey investigating the perception of second semester beginner-level French students using the *Chez Nous* video at a large Western Canadian University. Through questionnaires in 3 different classes, the data demonstrate that the students did not perceive the *Chez Nous* video as a very positive resource. They agreed that the video was a good tool to learn the target culture, to improve their listening skills, and helpful to practice listening comprehension. On the other hand, they also found that the video was overwhelming, too fast, too advanced, and confusing. Those negative opinions were likely a result of external factors such as the level of difficulty of the video, not enough strategies, proficiency level, teachers' attitude, and learners' attitude, and perception. This study provides a better insight into what might have influenced the perceptions of the students and also provides data on a topic which has very little research.

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Preface

The concept for this study came about last year when I started to teach beginner-level French. I began to notice that an integral aspect of the course material, which was being taught in the classroom, was not well perceived by the students. This was the *Chez Nous* video, which is the video that accompanies the text book used in the first year French courses (French 111 and 112). The video used in these classes is called *Chez Nous, Branché sur le monde francophone, 2002* (Valdman, A; Pons, C; Scullen, M.E & Jourdain, S.). Each episode is comprised of different documentaries that are 3-5 minutes long. It is a video with authentic clips that shows people in their daily life. Although the students found the video fun and relaxing after an 80-minute class, they also thought that it was not the ideal tool to practice and improve their listening comprehension. Seeing the majority of the students complaining, I gave them extensive viewing of the video in class and I sent them to the video laboratory. I wanted to know if their reaction would be the same. Sometimes the students liked the video and other times they hated it. There was a constant feeling of love and hate. However, I was also interested in knowing what the students in other classes thought about the video. I was told that their reactions were the same as those of the students in my class and instead of showing the tape again, the instructors either preferred to show another video or they never showed it to their students in the first place.

I was not satisfied with such an answer and in order to know more, I decided to conduct a study based on the learners' perception of the *Chez Nous*

video. Other French instructors agreed to participate in the study. I chose to conduct the study with second semester French students (French 112) as they had been exposed to the *Chez Nous* video to some degree in their first semester of taking French (French 111). For those classes that stopped using the *Chez Nous* video, a request was made to the instructors to show at least two clips to the students. They agreed to the request and showed the video two times. The perceptions of the students are recorded in this study and I can only hope that at some time in the future more research will be conducted in this area, providing instructors or language program coordinators who are in charge of selecting study materials with a better understanding of their students' perceptions of the materials used in the language class.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The ability to learn foreign languages to communicate with a wider scope of people has become a valuable asset in our society. However, the way we communicate with one another is dependent upon our reality, our experience and our worldview as we come from different cultures that can influence our behavior when we communicate. For the past two decades foreign language teachers have been looking for ways to make the learning experiences resemble more closely the situations that occur in the real world (Secules, Herron, & Tomasello, 1992). The curriculum is constantly being changed to adapt to the needs of the learner and to make his or her learning as authentic as possible. To do that, instructors have turned to video technology among other tools and techniques. This tool has become a well-known feature in many classrooms.

Hick, Hughes & Stott (1982) note that as sound recording provides a "truer recreation of spoken language" (p. 74) than pen and paper, so does video. The latter presents a truer communicative event with the inclusion of paralinguistic features. The ability of video to capture the whole context of any given situation in the clip is valuable. The learner is able to re-live the moment when something happened, and this contributes to his comprehension of the situation.

Moreover, video is recognized as being motivating and entertaining, a factor that fosters a positive attitude towards language learning and encourages a low affective filter (Krashen, 1981). Video is also seen as a useful and relevant medium as it presents to the learner the full communicative and cultural content of language use alongside the more traditional lexical and grammatical aspects

of language learning (White, Easton & Anderson, 2000). Phillips (1982) adds that "video is one of the most exciting fields into which [participation and creative involvement] can be channeled" (p. 86). In addition, Secules et al. (1992) say that video is a rich addition to the learning experience as it "permits second language learners to witness the dynamics of interaction as they observe native speakers in authentic settings speaking and using different accents, registers, and paralinguistic cues (e.g., posture, gestures)" (p. 480) .

As a result, video use is seen as a form of communication that can be understood without language. Video can manipulate language and is open to interpretation as we can sometimes understand the implied message through gestures, facial expressions or eye contact. Every language learner is unique and he or she has to devise strategies to understand and interpret the target language. Techniques that might help one person might not help another. Coombe and Kinney (1999) claim that "learners learn primarily because of what they bring to their classroom experience in terms of their perceived needs, motivations, past experiences, background knowledge, interests and creative skills" (p.21). They will thus interpret a particular video segment in relation to their own understanding. This is good as it makes the learners interact with the video.

One of the most appealing aspects of video, according to Phillips (1982), is the universal familiarity of television as a means of communication: "No student needs an introduction to it and communication is far more effective when it is both visual and oral" (p.87).

Allan (1985) notes that there are no right ways to use video. According to her, there are "as many right ways as there are effective uses of video to assist the learning of a language" (p.66). The person using video should explore the material to make the most out of it and not remain with the thought that there are rules that act as barriers. Exploring the material allows the person to know what actually works or does not work for him or her. The beauty of video lies in its simplicity as it is quite easy to explore it (Phillips, 1982).

Not many studies have looked at the learners' perception of the use of video in a second language (L2) program. The existing studies explore different issues: the use of advance organizers for introducing students to video (Bransford and Johnson, 1972; Hanley, 1993; Herron, 1994; Herron, Hanley & Cole, 1995; Mueller, 1980; Omaggio, 1986); the ways teachers perceive and make use of video in the classroom (Allan, 1985; Altman, 1989; Lonergan, 1984; Stempleski and Tomalin, 1990); and the positive benefits of video instruction on adult foreign language learners' listening comprehension skills (Rubin, 1990; Secules, Herron & Tomasello, 1992). White, Easton & Anderson (2000) are the only ones who conducted a study on students' perceived value of video in a multimedia language course. All these studies indicate the amount of research that is necessary to really understand the dynamics surrounding teachers' use of technology. The teaching field is not easy to understand as it is dependent on people's behavior, emotions, personal beliefs and perceptions. For instance, even when an activity works successfully in one specific learning environment,

using the same activity the next day in a different class might prove to be a complete failure.

For my study, I decided to conduct a survey that investigates different aspects surrounding the perception of video by second semester French students at a large Western Canadian University. Perception is defined by the Oxford English dictionary as "an interpretation or impression based upon one's understanding of a situation, etc.; an opinion or awareness" (http://dictionary.oed.com). In other words, perception is based on one's perspective and own judgment. As such, the aim of this study is to see how the students perceive the use of one particular videotape. The learners in this study have the option of viewing the video in and outside of the classroom. Although language and video use are constantly linked to one another, the ways in which the material is presented have a significant effect on how students learn the language, perceive its utility and form opinions.

In order to help foreign language teachers use video effectively, we need to know more about the perceptions of the learners who watch it. More specifically, we need to ask the following questions:

- What factors influence the learners to use video?
- What did the learners like most or did not like about the video as a learning tool?
- What did the learners learn from the video that is less easy to learn from other sources (e.g., textbooks, audio CDs, webpages)?
- Is there anything that the learners think is in need of change on the video?
- What is the learners' attitude towards the video?
- In what ways did the video help the learner?

Chapter 2: Review of the literature

While a great deal has been written about the implementation and use of video for learning linguistic information and content (e.g, Allan, 1985; Altman, 1989; Lonergan, 1984; Tomalin, 1986, 1990), far less attention has been paid to the perception of the language learners using the videotape. This thesis seeks to provide some answers for foreign language instructors who are interested in knowing the perceptions of learners who watch a specific video. This chapter describes the research to date on aspects such as listening comprehension, advance organizers and pedagogical uses of video. From this discussion, the fact emerges that very little research has been done on learners' perception of video.

Canning (2000) says that many people are confident about the value of audio-visual support for the development of foreign language learning; however, not many research studies have been done to support the claim that audio-visual materials really help in foreign language acquisition. From a review of more than 300 L2 related studies undertaken since 1970, Frechette (1976) concludes that "little notice seems to have been given to audio-visual materials..." (p. 384). Yet at the same time, language instructors spend a lot of time using audio-visual materials like video in the foreign language classroom. Danahy (1985) gives the example of the President of Harvard who said in his report to the Board of Governors that "technology is only like the trucks that bring us food: they do not determine the quality of our diet and our nutritional values; they only get the stuff to us" (p.53). Using video to support language learning will not be worthwhile

without proper guidance from teachers as they make use of their pedagogical knowledge.

2.1 Usefulness of video

There are a couple of factors that Stempleski and Tomalin (1990) mention with regard to the usefulness of video.

Motivation is the number one factor. When people watch a video, they are motivated to learn more as the language is experienced in an active way. In Lam (2000), videos helped the teacher as they "'attract students' attention' and another teacher said that 'it's more lively than reading'" (p.8). Stempleski and Tomalin (1990) believe that with the help of video, learners have an outlook at the culture, values, and customs of the native speakers. Video brings the target language into the classroom. Videotapes can also be stopped and reviewed at the instructor's or learner's discretion in order to review certain parts of the material. Nevertheless, Willis (1983) notes that

> in the excitement of experimenting with a relatively new medium there is a tendency for video viewers (both us, as teachers, and students themselves) to lose sight of language teaching objectives, and of students' own learning objectives, and to use video for insufficiently motivated purposes. (p.43)

In this case, enthusiasm for a new medium can be a hurdle in the way of teaching objectives. When the objectives of using the video are not clear, this could lead to improper or ineffective use of the material.

Communication is another important factor. According to Stempleski and Tomalin (1990), teachers have discovered that students are more ready to communicate in the target language after playing a video sequence. The richness of the video sequence is beneficial as it gives everyone the opportunity to express their opinions. This by itself creates a more interactive class.

Video also exposes the non-verbal aspects of communication. Stempleski and Tomalin (1990) point out that Robert Merabian, an American psychologist, has estimated that 80 per cent of our communication is non-verbal. This is an important part of communication. Video allows us to observe the non-verbal communication when we watch people's gestures, expressions, posture, dress and surroundings. Unlike Merabian, Willis (1983) calls this the non-vocal communication and tries to break it down into more specific features. She lists the following categories for non-vocal communication based on Abercrombie's (1968) findings:

Posture the general way the whole body is disposed, either when sitting or standing during conversation

Proxemics the distance at which people naturally stand from each other in various circumstances

Gesture superimposed on posture, involves less of the body at any one time, and changes more rapidly

Facial expression

Eye contact

(p. 34)

According to Lonergan (1984), "often gestures and mime can carry the whole meaning; words are unnecessary" (p.41). He further says that the ability to recognize, understand and use these features of the target language is an integral part of achieving communicative fluency.

Cross-cultural comparison is another important factor. Watching people from other cultures can help us to communicate in the target culture in the ways native speakers interact and behave. For example, the *Chez Nous* video portrays people from different walks of life, which adds more reality and concreteness to the language learning experience in the classroom. This is an important factor as the learner is able to compare his or her own culture with the target culture and is able to distinguish what makes the other culture different.

2.2 Using video for learning linguistic information

According to Allan (1985), there are several possibilities for presenting a video sequence. She warns against treating the video sequence purely as a vehicle for language as users will ignore visual cues and will miss the opportunity to focus on the visual message. To make good use of this medium, she suggests that "it could be used to present the language either for the introduction of new areas of language or to supplement what has been taught by other means and methods" (p.50). Video could also be used "to check whether students are already familiar with the language and can use it confidently" (p.50). Allan also states that "it could be used to stimulate learners to produce the language themselves through roleplay or discussion" (p.50). Allan further says that the

main role of video at a beginner stage is for the learners to transfer the limited amount of language they have to realistic situations outside the classroom. As such, this helps learners gain confidence in their learning and use that in the real world to communicate.

Moreover, Altman (1989) declares that "video challenges us to base our linguistic model on oral language and the target culture as well as on written language" (p.3). He further asserts that "video never allows us to forget that full understanding depends on our ability to perceive the reciprocal relationship between the language and the systems of culture that it defines and by which it is simultaneously defined" (p.4). According to the author, one appropriate exercise based on grammar or vocabulary is to play a video and ask students to raise their hands when they hear any of these forms (for instance, if they hear a relative pronoun, articles, numbers). Altman thinks that this encourages students to pay more attention to the video as they have to recognize these forms within the authentic speech. This exercise teaches them to break down the sequence in order to better understand it.

Instructors also should prepare a set of questions and exercises to make sure students know when to use the appropriate forms. Altman says that this does not prepare the students to understand as they are being trained to listen and have confidence in themselves. Nevertheless, he usually gives students key vocabulary the day before showing the video. Doing this helps students realize that "language is not an affair of grammar lessons and vocabulary lists but a matter of meaning and communication" (p.35). Thus, class time is used to

highlight understanding of the video sequence rather than introducing new vocabulary. The study of Tomalin (1986) is different from the study of Altman (1989) as the latter thinks that the teacher can stop the video at certain points to teach the vocabulary in class. The video contains background objects, colors, or people which can be used to increase students' vocabulary. He gives six steps to follow:

Step 1	Freeze the picture on the screen at an appropriate point
Step 2	Point to the thing to be taught, elicit what it is from the students
Step 3	Get the students to repeat it
Step 4	Go to the next item
Step 5	Consolidate the words taught by eliciting them from the class and writing them on the board
Step 6	Revise vocabulary by getting the students to pick out the vocabulary item taught when the video is running

(p.50)

With this kind of activity, students are more actively involved in the class, and they increase their vocabulary.

The study of Lonergan (1984) is in accordance with the study of Tomalin with regard to learning vocabulary. Lonergan gives the example of a short communicative sequence where the actor is "asking for directions" as he has to go to a specific place. According to the latter, this short sequence can be used for repetition practice to have good articulation and pronunciation. Also,

repetition involves body language which is not easy to understand in writing and difficult to explain to a class of beginners whereas "it is easy to imitate from the screen" (p.35). Furthermore, he says that it helps practice the formation of questions, an area which is taught insufficiently in classrooms. By watching native speakers talk and ask questions, students become aware of strategies that the former use in a particular context and environment. After viewing a video, students find better ways to formulate their own questions.

2.3 Comprehension

Herron, Hanley & Cole (1995) claim that although comprehension is essential for communication, little is known about how to facilitate understanding in a foreign language (FL) classroom. Swaffar & Bacon (1993) give some reasons for this kind of situation. Firstly, most studies were done on reading comprehension rather than listening. Secondly, most of the studies were conducted with ESL (English as a Second Language) students and not FL students. Thirdly, most of the research was done on the first language. It was not clear how to transfer knowledge of the first language to the foreign language. Comprehension of the foreign language is essential to learning the language. In the course of this section, we will see the different aspects related to comprehension. We will see how visual comprehension and listening comprehension are closely interrelated with one another.

In visual comprehension, there is the use of an advance organizer to help the L2 learners. The advance organizer is defined as a bridging strategy –

bridging from what the students already know and transferring that knowledge to new situations (http://uts.cc.utexas.edu/~best/html/learning/advorg.htm).

Omaggio (1986), Hanley (1993) and Herron (1994) refer to Ausubel (1960, 1961, and 1968) as the first advocate of the use of the advance organizer. Ausubel (1968) believes that learning should be an active mental process which is meaningful in order to be effective and permanent. He stresses the need to have advance organizers to help in the learning and retention process. Ausubel's (1963) advance organizers were focused only on written materials to help present the topic of discussion. He describes the organizers in the following way:

> These organizers are introduced in advance of learning itself, and are also presented at a higher level of abstraction, generality, and inclusiveness; and since the substantive content of a given organizer or series of organizers is selected on the basis of its suitability for explaining, integrating, and interrelating the material they precede, this strategy simultaneously satisfies the substantive as well as the programming criteria for enhancing the organization strength of cognitive structure.
>
> (p. 81)

As mentioned above, the organizer acts as a bridge between existing and new learning materials. The advance organizers used by Ausubel were in written form and with time they have changed to visual organizers.

Today, learners are constantly faced with different kinds of input such as visual and aural cues which comprise background noise, intonation, quality of

voice, body language, facial expressions, objects, and the people in the settings. These different types of input facilitate the understanding of the context. Baltova (1994) notes that students understand better when the utterances of a particular scene are supported by an action or by body language. However, scenes which involve long conversation are considered to be more difficult for beginner-level students as they have limited vocabulary and do not understand the language. In this case, visual cues are important as they can help with the information and facilitate the comprehension process.

Garza (1996) notes that Vereshchagin & Kostomarov (1990), Russian specialists in language and culture, think that visually-conveyed information brings both linguistic and cultural meaning to the learner.

> Facts perceived visually become the personal experience of the student, while verbal explanations reflect a detached foreign experience; not without reason is it said that it's better to see something once than to hear about it a hundred times. Besides, visual perception usually cannot be replaced by words. Therefore, the role of the visual mode remains unlimited, unique. (qtd. in Garza, 1996, p.5)

Visual information has a bigger impact on the learner as it seems to form part of the learner's experience. Canning (1998) also believes the video used in a classroom should be interpretive and to the point. The visual should show people in their daily lives and avoid stereotypes as the latter can be counter-productive to the language learning process. According to Rivers (1979), teaching materials that present stereotypes and caricatures of persons or

activities otherwise mentioned create bias, attitudes, and prejudices in the students. For the video to be useful, teachers should be very careful while choosing the materials and also make sure not to let any conflicts arise. The video must contain the desired linguistic material and the video segment should be thematically interesting (Garza, 1993). Also, teachers should pay attention to the quality of the image and to whether the captioning is in the relevant segment.

Herron (1994) did a study on the effect of an advance organizer on the comprehension and retention of information in a French foreign language video series. In the advance organizer, the teacher writes six short sentences on the board for the students, the aim of which is to summarize the events chronologically in the forthcoming video section. Herron finds that this advance organizer helps learners improve their comprehension and retain information.

Interestingly, Herron (1994) thinks this advance organizer is in line with Vygotsky's theory of "actual and potential development level". A learner brings two levels of development to the learning process, "the actual development", which is what he or she can do and "the potential development", which is what the learner will be able to do in the future. In between those two levels is the learner's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), a zone defined as the distance between the actual and the potential developmental level. Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) point out that the framework of the ZPD "brings all the pieces of the learning setting together – the learner, the teacher, their social and cultural history, their goals and motives, as well as the resources available to them"

(p.468). In this case, the advance organizer, with the help of the instructor, helps learners perform better in the second language.

Omaggio (1986) cites the research of Bransford and Johnson (1972) who investigated whether students that receive knowledge prior to hearing a passage do better than those who do not receive any information. In the study, the knowledge was in the form of pictures that provided information about the context. There were five groups in the study: (1) No context (subjects heard the passage with no pictorial clues); (2) Context before (subjects saw the appropriate visual before hearing the passage); (3) Context after (subjects heard the passage and then saw the appropriate picture); (4) Partial context (subjects saw a picture and then heard the passage, but the objects in the picture were rearranged); (5) No context [2] (subjects heard the passage twice with no context support). Statistically significant differences were found when the subjects had the context before rather than in the other four conditions. The learners recalled more ideas compared to the other four conditions. This study sheds light on the importance of providing the context before providing information.

Omaggio (1979) argued that there was too little research to confirm the claim that visuals help comprehension. She noted that more research should be done on the first and second language to clarify if visuals do help in relation to different conditions imposed on it. Mueller (1980) investigated the importance of visuals to listening comprehension. His study confirmed the results of Bransford and Johnson (1972) and Omaggio (1979) that visual advance organizers help in comprehension. Another study by Herron, Hanley & Cole (1995) indicates that

visual support in the form of descriptive pictures significantly improves students' comprehension. Their results of using twelve different videos with foreign language learners indicate that comprehension improved when they used advance organizers, such as pictures or some other kind of visual stimuli. Thus, the result gained from those studies did not indicate that "visuals are more effective than no visuals", but rather that certain visuals are better than others.

A study by Secules, Herron & Tomasello (1992) showed that students understand the information in a better way when they have visual cues. These help learners enhance their listening comprehension. However, language can be easily lost when presented by means of video due to rapid speech rate, unfamiliar vocabulary, and students' difficulty with transforming the speech into distinct words. This is more difficult when the learner has to deal with a language where he or she has to decide about word boundaries; for instance, when listening to spoken French, learners have to be careful when listening to words which have linking, liaison, and elision. This is the point when learners find the language overwhelming. They are frustrated as visual context alone or multiple replays do not help them understand the language. Therefore, the video used in the classroom should be shown in segments and not as a whole, especially if it is 10 minutes long. When these segments are broken down, it allows the teacher and the students to work out the comprehension part in a more organized way.

Lonergan (1984) and Omaggio (1986) note that the comprehension of the video by the learners is very complex as they cannot demonstrate at which level they have understood all the information. It is not an easy task to try to measure

this and it is also rarely desirable for learners to attempt such a comprehensive task as it can frustrate and create anxiety in them (Ur, 1984). Ur (1984) says that this could lead learners to say that they have not understood anything when in fact they have understood enough to communicate that understanding.

In addition, while listening to a video at an advanced level, learners can understand the meaning when they hear the sound. This helps in making a better connection between sound and meaning rather than the "single-medium texts" (Altman, 1989) that provide little or no visual support in listening and reading activities. Altman (1989) believes that video allows learners to use an "added nonlinguistic channel" to interpret the aural input.

2.4 Ways to watch video

Jackson (1999) gives four ways to watch video. The first one is to view a video silently. This will help an L2 learner predict the topic and the content of the video. Allan (1985) says that this helps learners think about the information before they begin the listening task. The second way is freeze-frame, where the learner uses knowledge from his or her first language to help comprehension. Silent viewing and freeze-frame activities help learners interact with the video. Lonergan (1984) believes that this encourages the learners to have an active viewing where they participate rather than a passive viewing. Hick, Hughes & Stott (1982) think that videos tend to put the learner in a passive role; however, this is not helpful to learning and the above mentioned activities encourage students to participate and produce more in regard to their oral and written skills.

The third way to watch a video is to raise paralinguistic comprehension through observing the facial expression or intonation of the character. If the character is frowning or shouting at someone, the learner gets a clue that the character is upset about something or someone. The fourth way ensures that students are motivated to watch the video for a purpose and understand the native speakers in order to avoid the feeling of frustration that was present when they first started to learn the language. Learners slowly realize that through constant practice and with the help of their teachers, they are able to understand the "real" language.

2.5 Authentic materials

Based on some evidence from her own research (Omaggio, 1986, 1993), Omaggio believes that authentic materials prepare learners to be more functional since they are exposed to rich and diverse language materials that better reflect the target culture. Omaggio (1986) thinks authentic materials are an integral part of a proficient classroom and emphasizes their use whenever and wherever possible. These authentic materials can be beneficial for the learners as they are exposed to the culture. Although Omaggio promotes the use of authentic materials in second language classrooms, she also warns against the use of unedited, non-pedagogical materials which may create problems since such materials are difficult to select and obtain (e.g. native speakers in conversations, radio broadcasts or other natural contexts). The solution, according to her, is to use materials which are easily manipulated and understood.

In Lam (2000), two teachers thought that video helped the students learn "'how to deal with the situation of the language' and 'understand something in context while it's going on'" (p.9). Another teacher used video because the students get to see the culture and gain a lot from the context through the images, body language and interaction among the native speakers.

2.6 Role of L2 teachers

Lindenau (1980) finds that the vast selection of technology can be difficult for some teachers to handle interactive video.

> [...] the prospect of having to keep up with all the existing techniques of operation is enough to put most teachers into a state of technological shock; it does not encourage them to use technology to support their teaching. (p.121)

According to Lindenau, teachers seem to be overwhelmed by technology. Video was quite a new medium in the 1980s and people were not used to handling this new technology. Teachers had to test and learn the material on their own. Time was an important factor as it took time to learn all the technicalities which did not seem worth it at the end of a long and unsuccessful attempt. Teachers had to think of ways to incorporate video successfully into the program and to have students enjoy the class and the video. Even if it was frustrating sometimes, the option appeared attractive. Lindenau thinks there should be some specialized teacher training that would help teachers with their pedagogical goals.

In a recent study, Lam (2000) suggests that language teachers do not use computers in their classrooms not because they are technophobes, who fear the use of technology, as some suggest, but because institutions and programs fail to observe the importance of training teachers and matching their goals with the tools they hope to employ. Teachers' decisions to use technology are not based "on a resistance to or adoration of technology, but rather on their beliefs about the benefits of the technology for their students" (Lam, 2000, p. 16). Cuban (1986, 1996) also claims that technology advocates have ignored the social organization of the classrooms that serves as an inhibitor of classroom technology use. They ignore the fact that teachers are expected to implement conflicting purposes. For instance, Cuban (1996) says that teachers have to maintain classroom order while creating personal relationships with each student. They also have to teach and understand students by initiating some community values in the classroom, and this takes some more time in the already crowded curriculum. He concludes by saying that "buying machines was an administrative decision; but using them has always been a teacher decision" (p.3).

A number of studies (Abdal-Haqq, 1995; Lam, 2000; Egbert, Paulus, & Nakamichi, 2002) note that a positive attitude does not ensure that teachers will use technology. There are many factors that prevent teachers from using technology. They include time pressure, lack of appropriate materials, resources and technical support, insufficient guidelines on the ways to apply it in the curricula, and inadequate training. According to Egbert, Paulus, & Nakamichi

(2002), teachers need to have their specific needs met during their technology training to remove any "barriers".

Lonergan (1984) notes that showing a video in a successful learning environment is the responsibility of teachers. If the technology is used skillfully, it facilitates successful language acquisition. However, teachers should be comfortable and confident in their capabilities while working with video (Lonergan, 1984). According to Connor (1984), the destruction of human confidence can be avoided through communication among language teachers, administrators, and representatives of technology. Teachers need to communicate their priorities and their needs to ensure that technology is able to serve them well. They have to do that as they are the ones in charge and act as the master of ceremonies for the variety of shows provided by the video (Altman, 1989). They also serve as active mediators between the screen and the students and try to bring energy and excitement to the classroom. Nonetheless, teachers alone cannot create the proper conditions to learn a language. Learners should also respond so as to create a successful learning atmosphere.

2.7 Manipulation of viewers

Arwady and Gayeski (1989) note that despite the array of choices present in video through visual, audio and emotional stimuli, the basic purpose of the latter is not to "dazzle the audience, but to manipulate the viewer" (p.3). The authors say that video needs to be well designed to work properly. A video sequence should capture the audience's attention and transport them through a

viewing encounter that demands attention, anticipation, and response. Video is not a visual medium, but rather it is a combination of audio and video signals which tries to inform, entertain, persuade, motivate and instruct the audience.

Compte (1993) adds that viewers are being manipulated by the ideas of the producers. They do not realize it as they are used to watching videos. They are pleased by the variety of shows that video can bring for entertainment and relaxation. As well, they are pleased that it does not impose anything on them (Lonergan, 1984). Due to a number of factors, videos that are not by definition "authentic" are generally designed with the purpose of easing learners' comprehension process (Porter and Roberts, 1987). These simulated "authentic" videos are repetitive and allow learners to have more time to access the content which can later result in partial or complete comprehension of that information. Slowly, students learn to distinguish between a situation that is formal or informal. Wood (1999) thinks that the sense of achievement that students gain from understanding even a short scene is important. This engages the interest of the learners who are eager to learn what happens next. They have to pay particular attention to the video and try to interact with it. They have to make use of their prior knowledge to help with language assimilation.

In spite of this, Altman (1989) observes that one shortcoming of individual viewing is that it tends to strengthen misunderstanding or poor listening habits. If the learners cannot hear an essential word at the beginning of the clip, there is no assurance they will be able to hear it at the end. Classroom alternation

between a video sequence and comments by teacher or students can help to correct any misunderstanding, faulty grammar or pronunciation.

Video is used by instructors all over the world and this trend of using video will continue to grow as it brings new materials to the language classroom. With video, variety is also easy to achieve (Altman, 1989). With one single sequence, it is easy to move from phonetics to vocabulary or from grammar to culture.

2.8 Learners' perceptions

According to Canning (2000), there are many limitations when considering the results of previous studies done on video. For instance, in many video studies, researchers use only one kind of group of students instead of random groups. Using different groups may give different results.

One example is the study done by White, Easton & Anderson (2000). The authors were interested in finding out how students use the video sources at their disposal. The study, entitled "Students' perceived value of video in a multimedia language course", was conducted in a dual-mode university in New Zealand that teaches languages through face-to-face instruction and distance education. The study investigated 26 distance learners enrolled in a beginner-level Spanish course. The different materials at their disposal were videotape, audiotape, textbook, workbook and study guide.

The researchers got information on how the students use, evaluate and respond to the video component. The major contribution of video was seen in the development of listening, speaking, and pronunciation skills; nevertheless

cultural and sociolinguistic factors also played an important role. Through video, students gained a better idea of how people communicate in the target language and the video also helped them to recall their lessons and/or vocabulary. Moreover, in one section dealing with questions on affective factors, students said they enjoyed the video and this helped them learn the language in a positive way. The researchers found that students perceived the video as something unique that "contributed to a rich learning environment" (p.174) as it replicated situations that foreign language classrooms cannot provide; in particular, it was the opportunity to witness the dynamics of interaction in the cultural context. According to the results, the authors concluded that it is important to understand how students use video as this can help in implementing better visual programs.

2.9 Conclusion

Overall, this literature review shows that the use of video in L2 classrooms depends on various issues such as the usefulness of video, using video to learn linguistic information, improvements in listening comprehension, ways to watch video, authentic materials that we get from video, the role of the L2 teacher, the way viewers are manipulated, and the perception of learners. Altman (1989) thinks it is important to develop new strategies for using video so that learners can improve their listening comprehension. There is an array of strategies and ways proposed by researchers. Perhaps the most popular strategy is the use of the advance organizer to help in the learning process. Throughout this review we have also seen what other researchers have done to ensure that students

understand a particular video sequence. However, a limitation of this literature review is that it does not focus solely on L2 learners. We saw only one study that deals with L2 learners' perception by White, Easton & Anderson (2000). Also, a number of studies deal with materials to be used in the L2 classroom by and for the language teacher while excluding the perception of L2 learners.

This literature review showed only one study that looked at the perception of distance learners. I have not come across any studies based on the perception of students who come to class regularly. It is important to know the perception of the L2 learners, because they are the main users of the video and are the ones the video is supposed to benefit in the foreign language classroom. The students in the French 111 beginner level told me that they either did or did not like the *Chez Nous* video. Instructors of other classes told me the same thing. I believe this is something worth investigating so that students who will take first year French next semester can benefit from the changes to the video component of the curriculum or to the way it is taught within the language classroom. If changes need to be made, then it would be good to know what kinds of materials are needed and available, or what kind of strategies and activities instructors could employ to create a more positive attitude towards the video.

We have seen a few studies that claim how video is good for learners, how students understand better when the utterances of a particular scene are supported by an action or by body language, how visually-conveyed information brings both linguistic and cultural meaning to the learner, how it helps students

learn linguistic information, how video at an advanced level helps learners understand the meaning when they hear the sound, and how visual cues help the comprehension process. Those studies seem to rely on the personal beliefs and experiences of language instructors as they do not often provide data to substantiate the claims that video facilitates language learning.

This study will attempt to address some of the limitations I found in the literature review since it will specifically examine L2 learners. The L2 learners in the present study have to watch the *Chez Nous* video, which is part of their syllabus. Later on during the semester, they have to take part in an exam to test their comprehension. Based on a survey done with three different classes, this study will try to assess the attitudes of L2 learners. This study will also contribute empirical classroom data to help support (or not support) all the claims about the benefits of video. Language instructors who are interested in the perception of their students using a particular video in their own classes could replicate this study. In sum, this study will answer the question "How do second semester students in French perceive the *Chez Nous* video?"

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter summarizes the participants, the instrument and the materials used to examine the research question. By examining the students' use of the *Chez Nous* video, the aim of this research is to contribute to the development of video use by increasing the instructor's awareness of students' responses. Seeking feedback from those who use the *Chez Nous* video will provide insights into the advantages and disadvantages of the video as a learning tool. This also provides an opportunity to acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of the learners involved in using this medium. In doing so, a set of strategies can be constructed and used when making decisions about integrating video in the language course. The research question is "How do L2 learners in French perceive the *Chez Nous* video?"

3.1 Participants

The participants for this study were 63 students enrolled in a second semester French beginner course (French 112). The participants were from three different classes. The researcher has named the three classes A, B, and C. There were 22 students from class A, 18 from class B, and 23 from class C. Along with Canadian students, there are also foreign students who are taking this course. Some of the students might have been more exposed to the video and others less due to frequent or infrequent use of it in the classroom and the number of visits to the video laboratory.

The classes meet for five hours per week; there are two 50-minute classes and two 80-minute classes. This study was conducted in the winter of 2005. The instructors are non-native speakers of French (with English and Portuguese as their native language) with several semesters of experience teaching introductory level classes in French. The courses were taught in French with some use of English. The materials used for the courses consisted of a textbook, a video, and an audio-CD. According to the syllabus, instructors have to show the video at the end of each chapter, which is once every two weeks. For this study, emphasis was put on the use of the video. The students also had the choice of viewing the video again outside of class time in the language laboratory.

3.2 Instruments

With the help of my supervisor, a questionnaire was designed for this study (Appendix B). Some of the questions were inspired by the questionnaire of White, Easton & Anderson (2000). The present questionnaire contains a total of 20 questions and consists of a range of response formats including ranking items and open-ended questions. Questions 1 to 14 are based on a 1 to 5 point scale, while questions 15 to 20 are open-ended questions. The purpose of the questionnaire was to examine the students' perception of the video component in their French 112 class. Results allow for a comparison between students' opinions in the three classes.

Questions 1 to 12 inquire about the ways in which the video helps students learn the language. The participants were asked to rate the usefulness of the video on a 1 to 5 point scale. Question 13 is more of an affective evaluation of the video and asks students to rate the way they felt when they watched the video, for instance, by indicating whether it was enjoyable, relaxing or confusing. Questions 14 to 20 deal more with the perceptions of the students of the use of the video.

3.3 Procedure

Ethics approval was sought before starting the survey. In the meantime, I approached the three instructors teaching French 112 and asked for their consent to conduct the survey in their respective classes. Once they agreed, I asked them to play the *Chez Nous* video as Class A and C were not using it. Thus, students in the three classes were shown two clips from the video so that they would be better able to answer the questions. As those instructors have access to Smart classrooms, they were able to play two different clips from the video depending on the chapter they were working on. I will later give a brief description of the way the instructors played one of the video clips. The survey was administered in week eight of the semester. I personally went into the classrooms and conducted the 10-minute survey during class time. It was conducted within a period of 1 to 2 days after the instructors had showed the video.

3.4 Video clips

The video used in these classes is called *Chez Nous, Branché sur le monde francophone, 2002* (Valdman, A; Pons, C; Scullen, M.E & Jourdain, S.). Each episode is comprised of different documentaries (Francophone countries, wedding celebrations in France, historical places in France, universities in France) which are three to five minutes long. It is a video with authentic clips that shows people in their daily life. The episodes correspond to the topics of the chapters in the *Chez Nous* text book. When using the *Chez Nous* video in the classroom, the three instructors usually play the video segment two to three times. Each clip on the video is composed of three separate sections: Previewing Activity, Viewing, and Post Viewing Activity. The Previewing Activity section is an advance organizer. Students usually have a list of sentences asking for their opinion prior to watching the video and they have to discuss them. Then, the instructor shows the video two to three times and the students try to write down their answers for the listening comprehension part during viewing. The final section is usually based on the students' interpretation of the clip and involves the students having to give their opinions in a class discussion.

Furthermore, the instructors of Class A and C do not have their students watch the *Chez Nous* video outside of class time in the laboratory, nor do they show it after every chapter in class as they think it is too difficult. They showed the video twice during this semester as the researcher wanted the students to get used to it. In the previous semester, the instructor of Class A showed the video a few times to her students, while the instructor in Class C never showed it. On

the other hand, the instructor of Class B uses the *Chez Nous* video with her students. She uses it as it is in the syllabus and accompanies the textbook. She believes the *Chez Nous* video to be very good in terms of authenticity. She plays it in class and later has her students go to the video laboratory to watch it at their own convenience. To make sure that students go to the lab, the instructor assigns certain exercises that they are required to complete.

3.4.1 Class A (Appendix C)

For the purpose of this study, Class A started with Clip 8.1 "*Kids from the suburbs.*" Before watching the video, the class discussed the Previewing Activity. The instructor wrote the words "positive" and "negative" on the board to know the way the students feel about the given topic. Students volunteered their ideas for both columns, and the instructor wrote them on the board. There were approximately five ideas for each column.

Before viewing, the instructor read the Viewing Activity questions (2-7) out loud and confirmed that all of the students knew what they would be listening for. They watched the clip twice. After two viewings, they discussed the questions and the instructor wrote the students' answers on the board. As a group, they then discussed the Post viewing section (question 8). The instructor recorded students' ideas on the board in point form.

3.4.2 Class B (Appendix D)

The instructor played clip 7.1 "*A small glass of wine, please*". She used some questions from the *Chez Nous* video activities manual. The questions comprised of two parts, the first part "En Regardant" tested visual comprehension and the second part "En Ecoutant" was for listening comprehension. There was no class discussion before watching the video. The instructor read out the questions so that the students knew what they were supposed to do. They watched the clip three times. The instructor played the video without sound for the first viewing and the students had to do the "En Regardant" part. The video was played two more times and the students had to do the "En Ecoutant" part. At the end, there was a class discussion based on the different kinds of drinks shown in the video. Thus, the students had to watch the clip and then volunteer their answers. The instructor wrote down the answers on the board.

3.4.3 Class C (Appendix E)

The instructor played clip 7.2 "*Various types of meals*" at the end of the class. The instructor also used questions from the *Chez Nous* video activities manual for the viewing and post-viewing part. She explained the questions and the students watched the video twice and answered the questions. The first question was based on the students' knowledge of the "Eclairages" section found in the textbook in chapter 7, lesson 2. The "Eclairages" section usually consists of cultural information on the target language. There was a class discussion on

the various types of meals the native speakers in the video consume. The instructor also wrote down the answers on the board.

3.5 Data analysis

In this study, all the quantitative data (questions 1 to 14 and question 20) were compiled and percentages were calculated to present the results. Also, to have a better understanding of the results, the researcher categorized the students' responses under three main headings: Agree, Neutral and Disagree. Students' responses on the survey for "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" were collapsed into the category "Agree", and responses for "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree" were collapsed into the category "Disagree". This was done in order to facilitate the evaluation and interpretation of the data, because even if students were disagreeing with a specific statement to different extents (choosing "Strongly Disagree" or "Disagree" in their response), ultimately they were disagreeing, which is what was needed to be documented in the results. The raw data for each class can be found in Appendices F to H. For the qualitative data (questions 15 to 19), the results were categorized so that the most common responses were grouped together and percentages were once again calculated.

3.6 Resources

The students at this large Western Canadian University have many resources at their disposal. The Arts Resource Centre (ARC) is responsible for showing the *Chez Nous* videotape every day based on a specific class schedule.

French 112 students are expected to watch a video every other week in the ARC. They can go to the video laboratory at their own convenience. However, they cannot check out the tapes. The instructions on how to access the videos for the specific course are posted on the wall. In the eventuality of any problems, students can always consult ARC staff. At the end of each chapter, students have the opportunity to watch the video in the classroom. The instructors help students in their listening comprehension and try to help and advise them on ways to work with comprehension questions. The students in Class B were given an assignment to complete. They did not have the choice of not going to the video laboratory as the students in Class A and C did.

Chapter 4: Results and discussion

This chapter reports the results of the survey that was collected in three French language classrooms in February 2005. The three classes watched the *Chez Nous* video that introduces a chapter topic. Each question was taken directly from the survey and is followed by a diagram indicating the percentage of students who selected each of the proposed responses. The findings for each question will be briefly discussed in order to understand the visual representation of the results.

4.1 Support of the video

Question 1 (Fig.1): The video helped me increase my French vocabulary.

In Class A, the video does not seem to have helped to increase the French vocabulary as 68% of the students disagreed while the rest remained neutral. In Classes B and C, the number of students disagreeing (B=67%, C=61%) is still high; however, we do have some of the students (B=11% and C=22%) who found the video helpful in increasing their vocabulary.

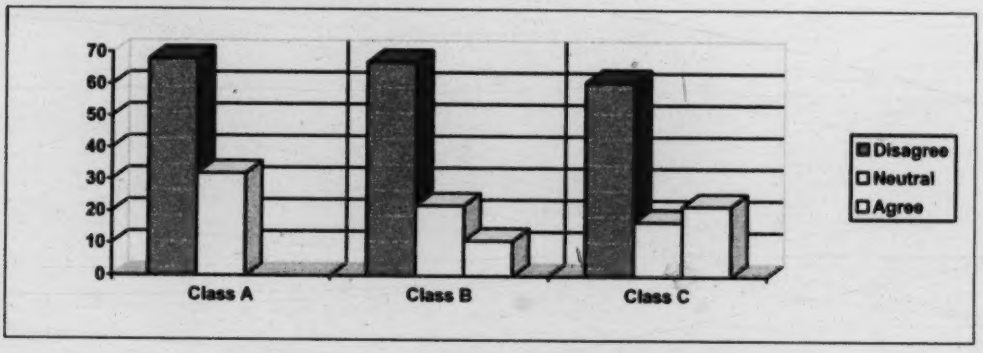

Figure 1. Increase Vocabulary (Qn.1)

Question 2 (Fig.2): The video helped me to learn the grammatical structures of French.

In all three classes, the majority of students disagreed that the video helped them learn grammatical structures. In Class C, 91% of the students disagreed. Some remained neutral while only a few in Classes A (9%) and B (6%) agreed that the video helped them learn grammatical structures.

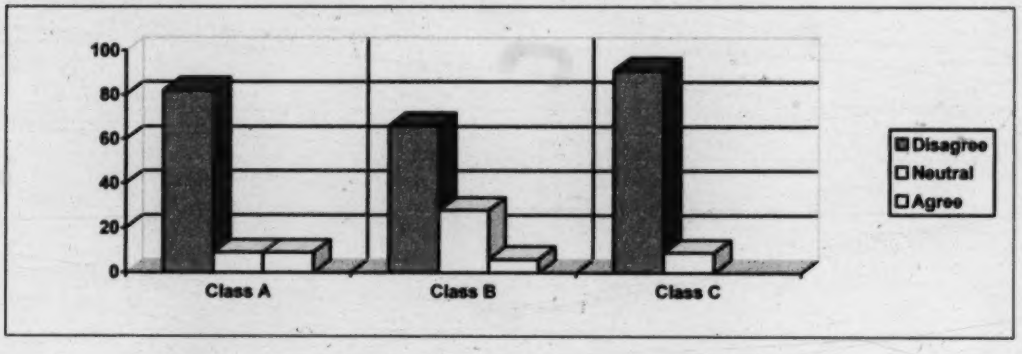

Figure 2. Grammatical Structures (Qn.2)

Question 3 (Fig.3): The video helped me to learn the culture of the target language.

Students in the three classes definitely perceived the video as helping them improve their knowledge of the target culture. 59% agreed in Class A, 63% agreed in Class B, and in Class C, 43% of the students agreed.

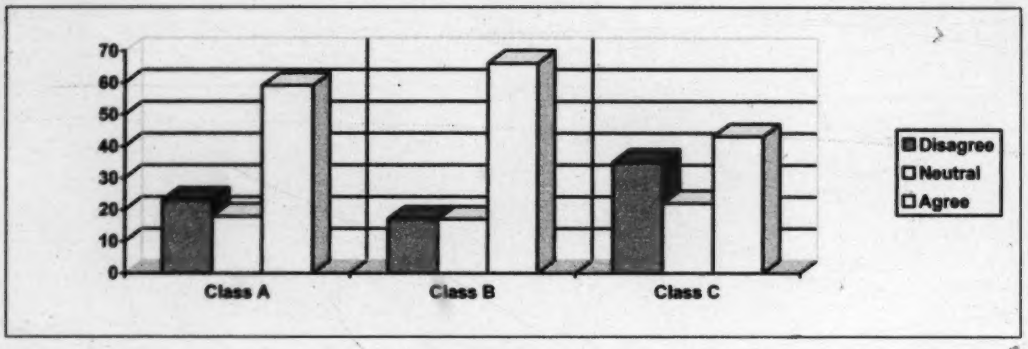

Figure 3. Culture (Qn.3)

Question 4 (Fig.4): The video helped me improve my listening skills in French.

In Figure 4, the results indicate that a large percentage of the students in Class B (73%) agreed that the video helped them improve their listening skills. In the other two classes, the responses seem quite different. In Class A, 59% disagreed that the video helped, while 39% in Class C agreed that the video helped in their listening skills.

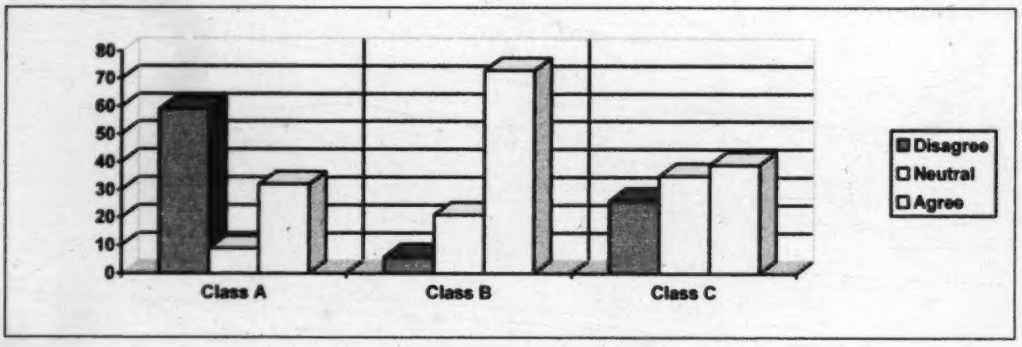

Figure 4. Listening Skills (Qn. 4)

Question 5 (Fig.5): The video helped me improve my pronunciation of French.

In Class A, more than half of the students (68%) disagreed that the video helped them improve their pronunciation. 39% of the students agreed in Class B that the video helped them while 39% disagreed that it helped. In Class C, 45% of the students remained neutral while 44% disagreed and 9% agreed that the video helped them.

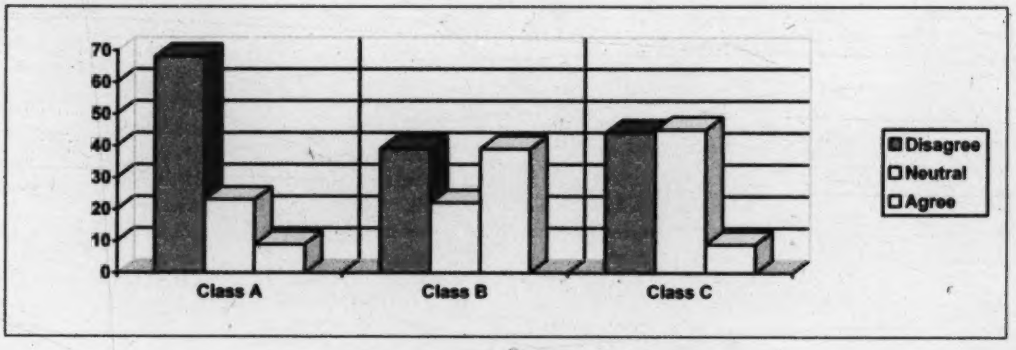

Figure 5. Pronunciation (Qn. 5)

Question 6 (Fig.6): The video helped me to learn idiomatic expressions in French.

The majority of students in the three classes seemed to disagree that the video helped them gain any idiomatic expressions. 82% strongly disagreed in Class C. Some of the students (A=23%, B=33%, C=13%) remained neutral while a very small minority (A=4%, C=5%) agreed that they found the video helpful. There was no positive response from Class B.

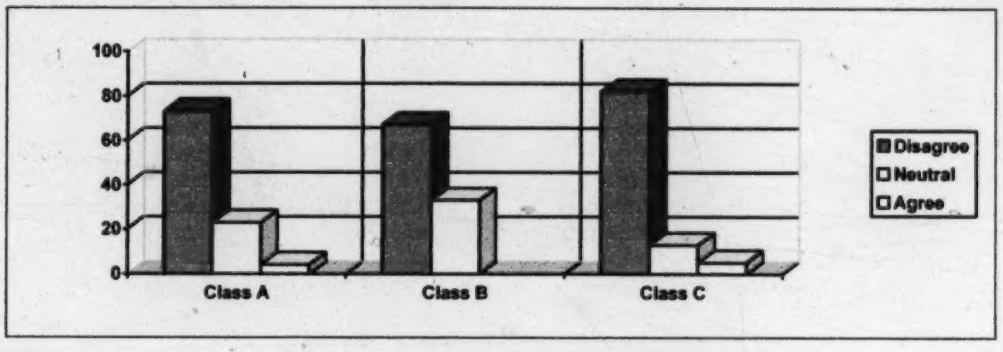

Figure 6. Idiomatic Expressions (Qn. 6)

Question 7 (Fig.7): I used the video to practice for the listening comprehension exam.

Class B seemed to be the only class where students (50%) watched the video to practice for the listening comprehension part of the exam. In Class A and C, the majority disagreed (A=64%, C=83%) about using the video to practice listening comprehension while some remained neutral (A=27%, C=9%) and some agreed to use it (A=9%, C=8%).

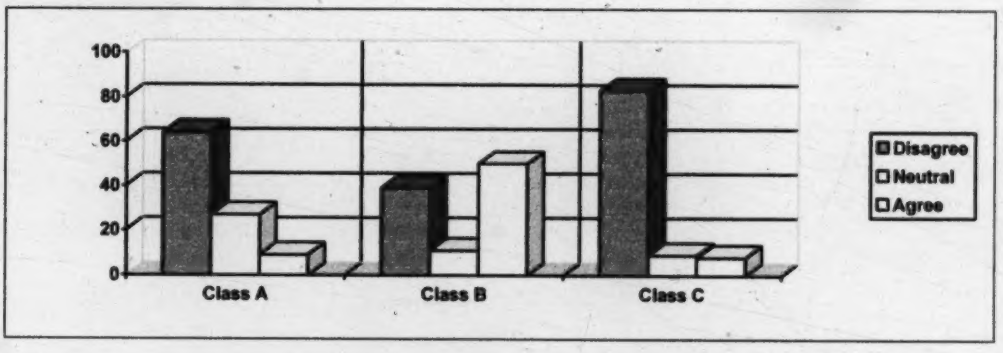

Figure 7. Practice Listening Comprehension (Qn. 7)

Question 8 (Fig.8): I played back parts that I don't understand.

The responses in Classes A, B, and C are quite divided among the students. Some students disagreed (A=37%, B=28%, C=35%), a small number remained neutral (A=18%, B=22%, C=30%) and others (A=45%, B=50%, C=35%) played back the video when they did not understand anything.

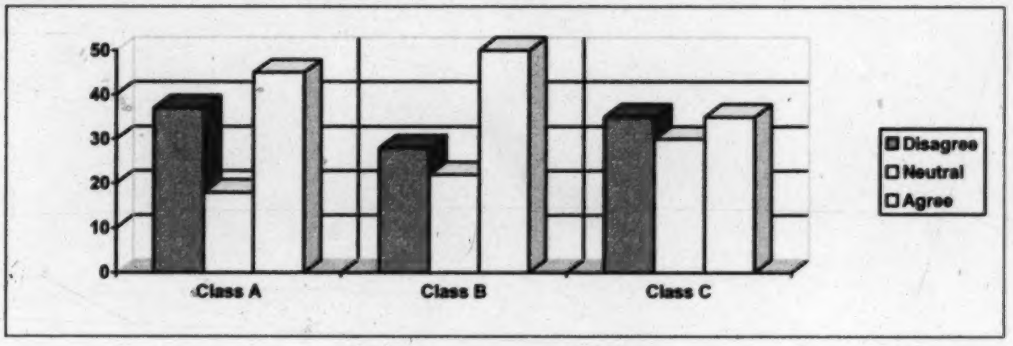

Figure 8. Play Back (Qn. 8)

Question 9 (Fig.9): I understood the content of the video when I saw the visual setting.

In Figure 9, 18% (A), 6% (B) and 39% (C) disagreed that they understood the content while watching the video. However, the majority of students agreed that they understand the content when they have visual settings. The responses for the "Agreed" section look quite similar in the three classes as 46% in Class A, 55% in Class B and 57% in Class C responded positively.

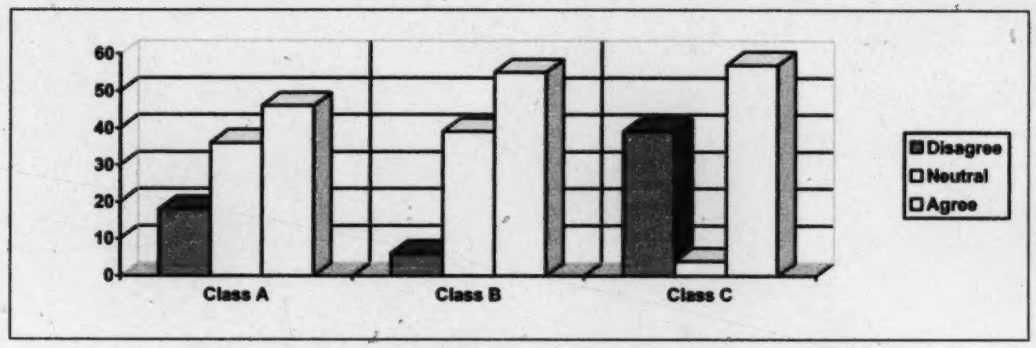

Figure 9. Understand Content/Visual settings (Qn. 9)

Question 10 (Fig.10): I understood the language spoken when I saw the visual expressions.

In Class A, 50% disagreed, 32% remained neutral, and 18% agreed that the video helped them. In Class B the number of neutral answers is 39% while another 39% of the students agreed that they understand the language spoken when they see the visual expressions. Class C follows a similar path as Class A and shows that 56% disagreed, 35% remained neutral, and 9% agreed that the visual expressions helped them understand the language spoken.

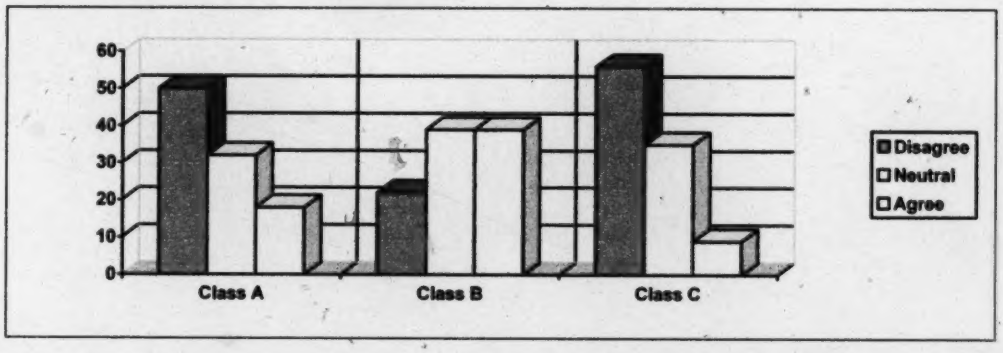

Figure 10. Understand Language Spoken/Visual Expressions (Qn. 10)

Question 11 (Fig. 11): The video helped me to remember the story line.

In Figure 11, the responses again looked quite similar for Classes A and C. 50% of the students in Class A disagreed that the video helped them remember the story line while 23% agreed that it helped them. In Class C, 43% disagreed while 22% agreed. In contrast, in Class B 55% agreed that the video helped them remember the story line while only 17% disagreed and 28% remained neutral.

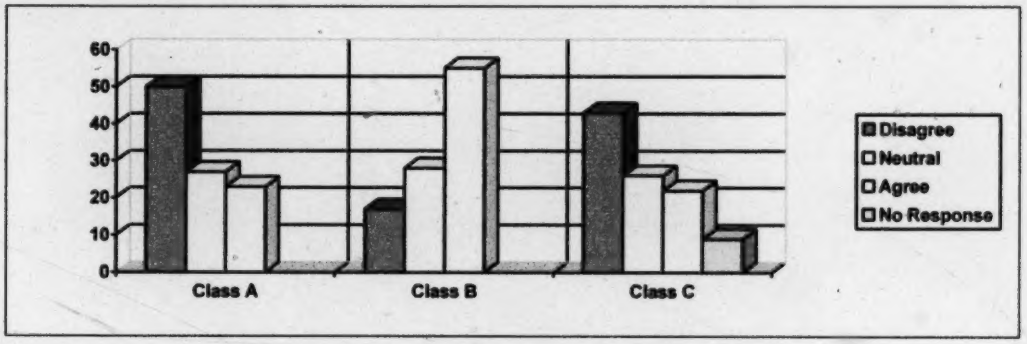

Figure 11. Remember Story Line (Qn. 11)

Question 12 (Fig.12): Hearing the language spoken helped me remember the vocabulary.

39% of the students in Class B agreed that hearing the language spoken helped them remember the vocabulary. The responses in the other two classes are the opposite as only a small minority (A=9%, C=4%) of the students seemed to agree while the majority (A=73%, C=74%) disagreed that hearing the language spoken helped them remember the vocabulary.

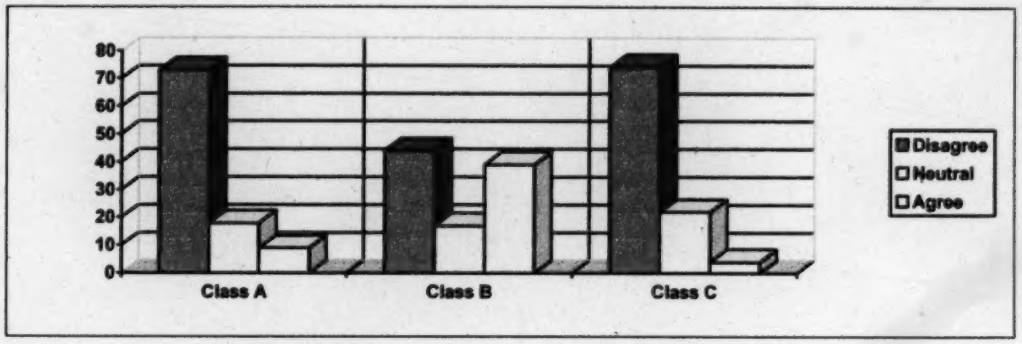

Figure 12. Remember Vocabulary (Qn. 12)

4.2 Affective evaluation

Question 13 (Fig 13, 14 &15): The video was...

This section is divided in subcategories to describe the way the students feel about the video. I have decided to separate the classes to have a better idea of their affective evaluation and also because the video was implemented differently in each class. The statement on the questionnaire was "The video was..." with a list of nine attributes that the students were asked to rate.

Class A (Fig.13): The responses in Class A paint a very clear picture of the students' overwhelming negative evaluation of the video. 63% of the students did not find the video enjoyable, 77% did not find it relaxing, 73% did not find it satisfying, 54% did not find it stimulating and another 41% disagreed that it was interesting. The vast majority of the students also found the video to be overwhelming (90%); 95% found it too fast; 86% found the vocabulary to be too difficult, and 86% found it confusing.

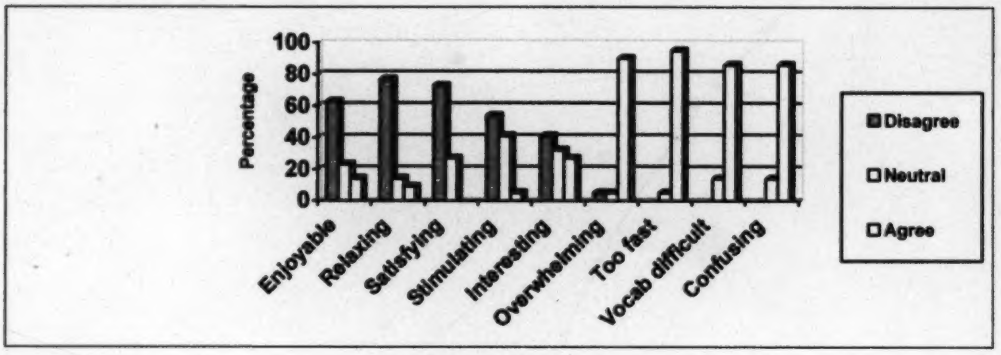

Figure 13. Class A (Qn. 13)

Class B (Fig.14): As Figure 14 shows, some students in Class B had a more balanced opinion of the video. More than a third of the students found the video enjoyable (45%); stimulating (39%) and very interesting (45%). Others did not think it was relaxing (50%) and satisfying (50%). However, they also agreed that it was overwhelming (50%) and too fast to understand (83%), that the vocabulary was too difficult (50%) and that the video was confusing (55%).

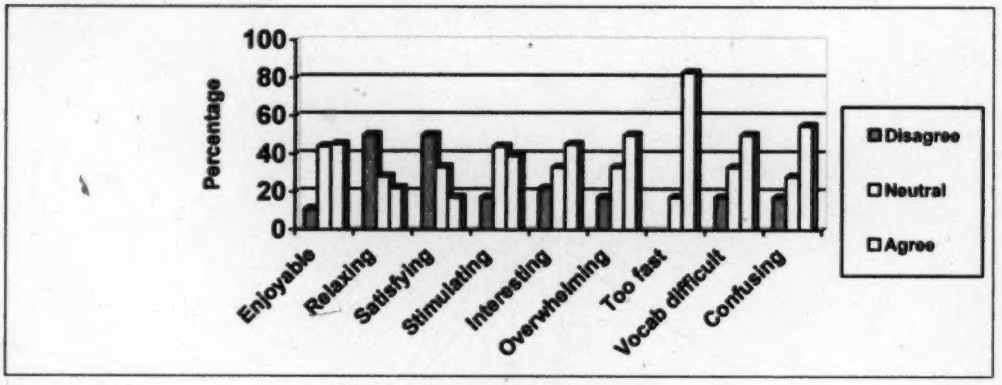

Figure 14. Class B (Qn. 13)

Class C (Fig.15): The responses in Figure 15 look quite similar to Figure 13: Class C seemed to experience the video similarly to Class A. The students did

not seem to have enjoyed the video as they disagreed that it was enjoyable (60%), relaxing (91%), satisfying (73%) and stimulating (48%). However, about one third of the class found it quite interesting (35%). Many also agreed that it was overwhelming (87%) and too fast (96%), that the vocabulary was difficult (87%) and that it was confusing (82%).

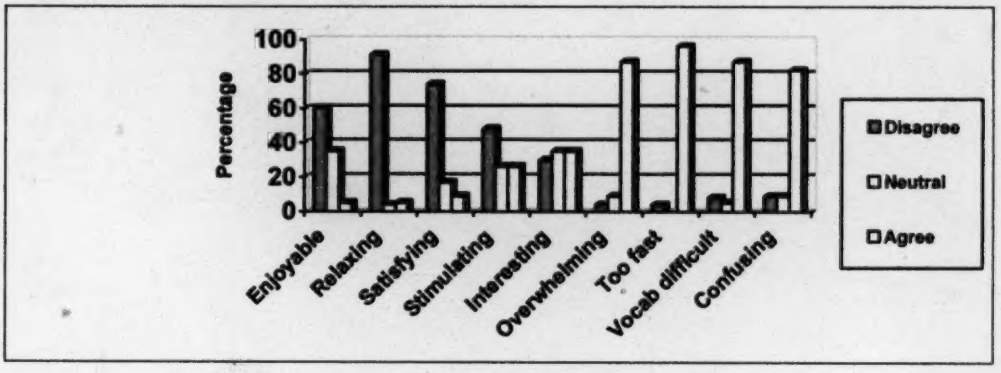

Figure 15. Class C (Qn. 13)

4.3 Overall evaluation

Question 14 (Fig.16): Overall, the video was an excellent tool to help me learn French.

Overall, 86% of the students in Class A disagreed that the *Chez Nous* video was an excellent tool to learn French. The same kind of response was found in Class C as 82% disagreed. In both classes, none of the students thought the video was a good tool to learn French. In Class B, 45% of the students remained neutral and 33% disagreed that it was an excellent tool while 22% of the students agreed and showed a more positive attitude towards the video.

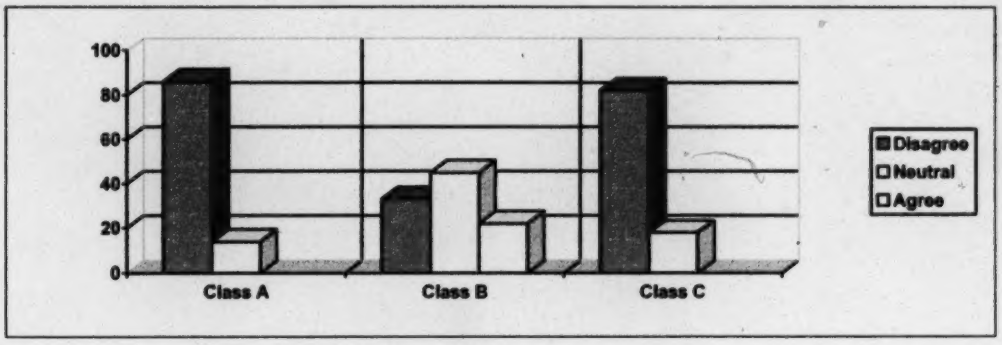

Figure 16. Overall (Qn. 14)

4.4 Qualitative responses

The questionnaire also contained more qualitative questions pertaining to the use of the video as a learning tool. Students' responses were categorized according to common themes, the number of responses per answer was counted and the totals converted to percentages.

Question 15 (Fig.17): What did you like most about the video as a learning tool?

Students from the three classes expressed their interest in learning French culture in an authentic setting. Several students in Class A (31%), Class B (28%) and Class C (21%) pointed out that they learn more French culture from the video. According to one student in Class A, while watching the video they learned about the lifestyle of French people, "the houses they live in, the food they eat and the way they dress". Students also learned about geography, music and the way language fits the context when people interact. Moreover, the students added that the visuals really helped them understand the story line (A=23%, B=17%, C=9%). They were able to read the body language and

understand the spoken language along with the setting. Visuals also helped relate the vocabulary with something more tangible. As one student in Class B said, "having visual clues are good to understand and associate vocabulary of topics we are discussing". 18% in Class A, 39% of the students in Class B and 9% in Class C agreed that the video provided training in a practical and relevant aspect of language through listening and understanding. It helped the students improve their listening skills and also know how French is spoken in a "natural setting". The students further added that when they hear the language spoken in real situations, they are better able to work on their pronunciation. A small minority of students from the Classes B (6%) and C (9%) pointed out that hearing people other than the regular instructor is also a good practice. 17% of the students in Class C treated the video as a challenge while none of the students in Classes A and B treated the video that way. The students in Class C have been the least exposed to the video as they have not watched it in the French 111 beginners' level course compared to the other two classes. One student in Class C said that "it challenged me to try to pick out parts necessary to answer questions". It also challenged others to listen better and test their comprehension of the materials. As Figure 17 shows, 17% of the students in Class A found the video interesting, and as one student stated "more interesting than book", while students in Class B and C did not comment on the video as being interesting.

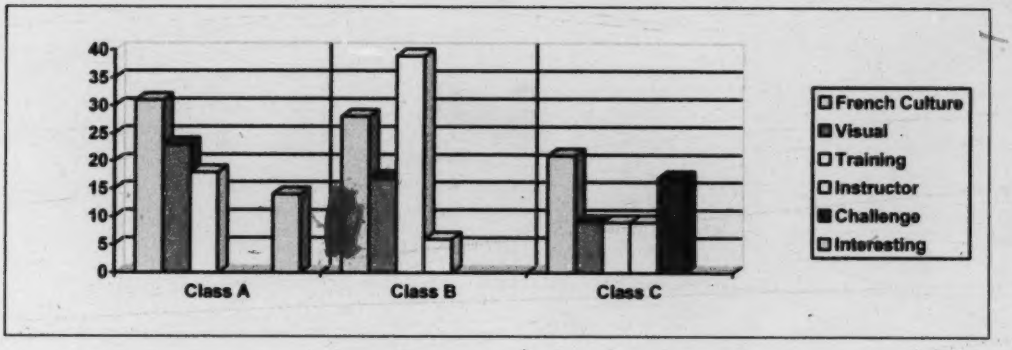

Figure 17. Positive aspects of the video as a learning tool (Qn. 15)

Question 16 (Fig.18): What didn't you like about the video as a learning tool?

The responses from the three classes coincide. The students all agreed on four factors. They found the video to be too fast (A=23%, B=28%, C=26%), to be too advanced (A=41%, B=17%, C=26%), containing too much new and difficult vocabulary (A=9%, B=6%, C=22%), and to be of bad sound quality (A=9%, B=45%, C=17%). The biggest problem that students in Class A had with the video was that 41% found it to be too advanced; Class B (17%) and C (26%) shared this opinion but to a lesser degree. As for Class B, 45% of the students found the sound quality of the video to be the worst part. Only 9% in Class A and 17% in Class C found the sound quality to be bad. Responses in Class C seemed quite divided among the four factors; however, students did not find the video confusing but they did find it outdated (9%), which none of the other classes mentioned.

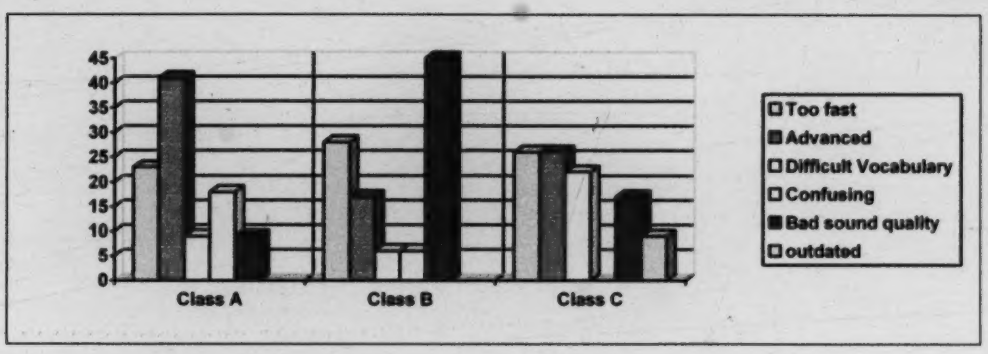

Figure 18. Negative aspects of the video as a learning tool (Qn. 16)

Question 17 (Fig.19): What did you learn from the video that is less easy to learn from other sources (e.g., textbook, audio CD, webpages)

The students were asked to say what they learned from the video that is less easy to learn from other sources (e.g., textbook, audio CD, webpages). The main answer in Class A, from 27% of the students, was that it is easier to learn French culture and understand the cultural aspects that surround it. Only 11% in Class B and 9% in Class C agreed that the video made it easier to learn about French culture. A small percentage of students in Class A (14%) and C (9%) said that the visuals helped them understand the context. Through visual support, students also got an idea of the setting in which to use the vocabulary. 18% in Class A and 56% of the students in Class B said that through the video, they got a real-life experience with that culture regarding particular use of words, pace and intonation. It also portrayed the daily activities of the people. Moreover, the students agreed that the video helped them acquire that knowledge. It also allowed seeing how French is spoken for an entire conversation and the way people interact through their body language (A=5%,

B=6%) and their pronunciation (A=5%, B=17%, C=35%). All of these aspects helped students grasp the meaning of words or the context.

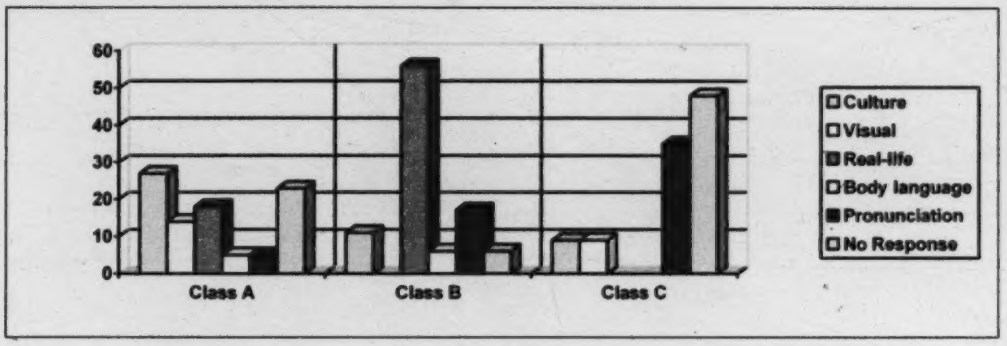

Figure 19. The video as opposed to other sources (Qn. 17)

Question 18 (Fig.20): Is there anything that needed to change on the video (do not refer to the content)? Can you elaborate?

Students in the three classes repeatedly proposed many changes. The most common response was to have a video with slow pace. 41% of the students in Class A, 39% in Class B, and 30% in Class C proposed having non-native speakers speak at a slow pace and also use easy vocabulary (A=9%, C=17%). 9% in Class A, 39% in Class B and 22% in Class C also suggested getting better recordings that have good sound quality. One student remarked that "it seemed like the video was filmed during the windiest day in Paris". For some (A=5%, C=4%), the video was too outdated and needed to be changed. Moreover, there were also several requests to have a video with more repetitions (C=9%), with subtitles (A=5%, C=6%), on a well-defined topic (A=9%), and with larger breaks in between interviews for better comprehension (B=6%).

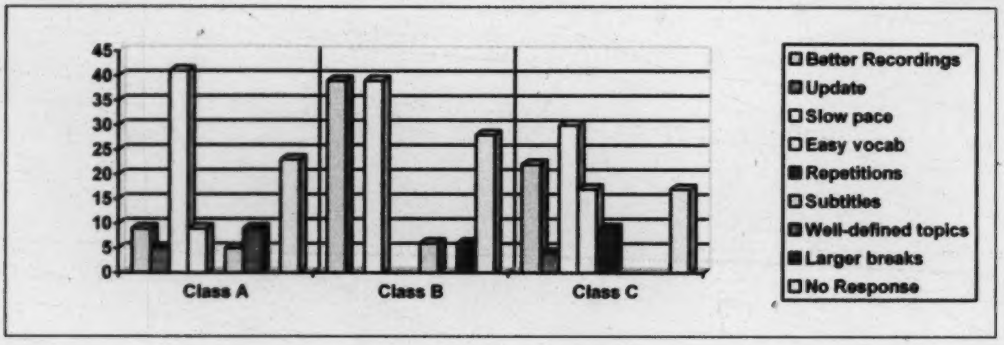

Figure 20. Changes in the video (Qn. 18)

Question 19 (Fig.21): Did you have any other comments on the video?

Students from the three classes said the video was not very helpful in the test/exam preparation or in improving overall comprehension (A=32%, B=22%, C=9%). They said the video was too advanced for beginner French students especially with the rapid speech rate (A=5%, B=6%) and the constant accent change of the actors. One student in Class A pointed out that it would be good to watch it more often along with a script while another student in the same class said "I wonder why such a great book has such a poor video". A small percentage of students in Class B (6%) wanted to have subtitles on the video. Others wanted to have a different video (A=9%) and have cartoons or kids videos. However, some students in Classes B (11%) and C (13%) found some positive aspects of the video. They said the video was a good tool to increase French comprehension and listening skills. For others it was "amusing" and had great music. One student in Class B remarked that "even if the video is not the real thing, it is the next best thing while living in a province that does not have a large French population".

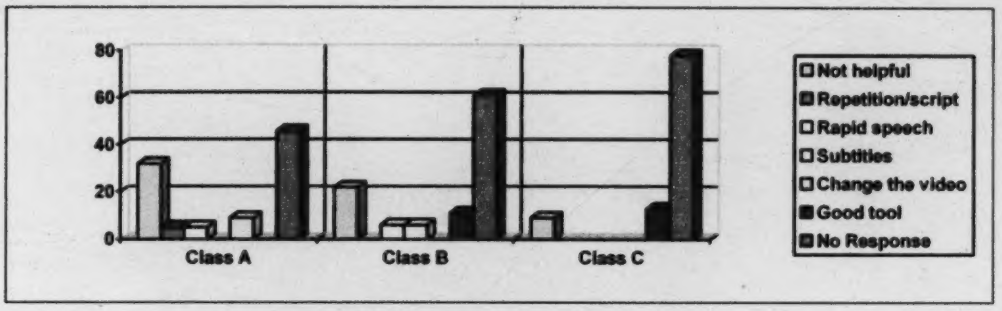

Figure 21. Additional comments (Qn. 19)

4.5 Language

Question 20 (Fig.22): Have you learned a foreign language before? If yes, which one?

The final question on the questionnaire inquired about the number of languages the students had studied. I wanted to know if the students who had studied another language before learning French had a better perception of the video. The languages that the students have studied were Arabic, English, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Pali, Spanish, Thai, and Ukrainian. However, based on Figure 22, the majority of the students (A=64%, B=78%, and C=65%) had never studied any other language. French seemed to be the first foreign language they were learning. The 4 students who had learned another language in Class B all liked the video. Of the 7 students in Class A and 8 students in Class C who had learned another language before, 3 in Class A and 2 in Class C did not like the video at all.

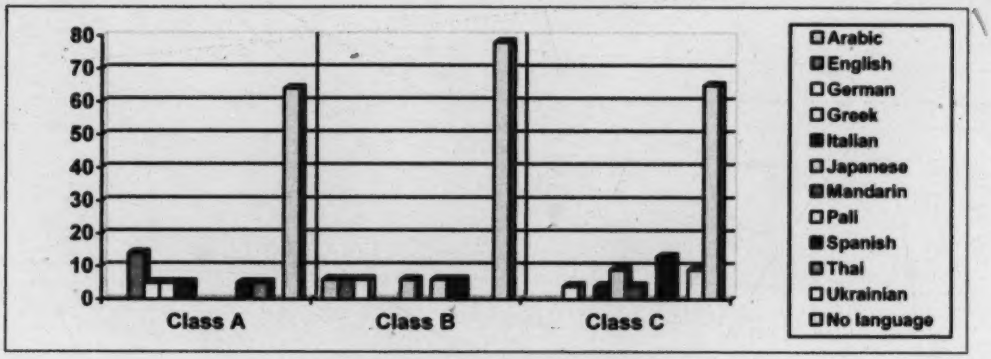

Figure 22. Language (Qn. 20)

4.6 Discussion

The results of the analysis will be used to discuss the main research question addressed in this study: How do the students perceive the *Chez Nous* video?

To summarize, we have seen in what ways the video was well or not so well perceived by the students in the three classes. The video was not seen to have increased the students' vocabulary with a few exceptions in Class B and C, nor was it seen as helping to increase grammar, with a small exception from Class A and B. The video was perceived as helping the students in all classes learn the target culture. The majority of students in Class B and a smaller number of students in Class C thought that the video helped improve their listening skills, whereas the students in Class A disagreed. Only a small number of students in all classes thought that the video helped to improve their pronunciation, and almost no-one thought it helped in gaining any idiomatic expressions. Half of Class B considered the video helpful to practice listening comprehension while the students in the other classes disagreed to a large

extent. Many students in the three classes stated that they played back parts that they did not understand. They also agreed that they understood the content when they had visual settings. However, they did not feel they understood the language spoken when they saw visual expressions. Furthermore, among the three classes, Class B showed students who agreed that the video helped them to remember the storyline (55%) and the vocabulary (39%). However, a vast majority disagreed that they do not remember the story line (A=50%, C=43%) or the vocabulary (A=73%, C=74%). Class A and Class C both did not feel the same way as Class B.

When asked about how they feel about the video, the majority of the students in Class A and C had a very negative opinion; they found that the video was overwhelming, too fast, too advanced and confusing. In Class B, it seems that the students liked the video more, indicating positive responses on the survey, except for the fact that the majority found the video too fast. Overall, the vast majority in Classes A and C disagreed that the video was an excellent tool to learn French, while at least some students (22%) in Class B agreed with this statement.

Some of the positive aspects of the *Chez Nous* video were that students learned French culture and the visuals helped them understand the storyline. It was good training and also good practice in terms of hearing other people use the language than the regular instructor. The video was also seen as a challenge to listen better and be able to work with the comprehension section. Some students also found it an interesting tool compared to the book. Some of

the negative aspects of the video that were mentioned were that it was too fast and advanced, the vocabulary was difficult, the video was confusing, the sound quality was bad, and the video was outdated.

When asked about the video as opposed to other sources such as textbook, audio CD and webpages, the students said that they learned more about the culture, and that the visuals help to understand the context. There were real life situations and the students could see the body language and see and hear the people talk. According to the students, the above-mentioned factors are different and easier to learn from the video as compared to the other sources.

The students proposed many changes such as better recordings, a new and modern video, speakers talking at a slow pace and the use of easy vocabulary. They also suggested repetitions and subtitles. Students also thought the topics on the video should be well-defined and offer larger breaks in the conversation.

When asked for additional comments, some students said that the video was not helpful as the speech was too fast. They suggested changing the video, to have more repetitions in the clip, to provide a script for the student, and to have subtitles. However, some students in Class B thought it was a good tool to increase their listening skills and comprehension.

The students were also asked about the number of languages they have learned. The majority of the students in the three classes reported that they only

had English as their native language and that French was the first foreign language they were learning.

Prior to watching the video, the instructors of the three classes usually give some class work to the students. The class work is based on the topic of the video. The class work can serve as an advance organizer that prepares students for what they will be watching. The students work in groups or in pairs, and there is a class discussion afterwards. The students in Class A had a discussion on the topic they were going to watch. The students in Class C did not have any context before watching the video. However, the responses from the survey of Class A and C were quite similar in their negative reaction to the video. On the other hand, students in Class B did not discuss the topic prior to watching the video either. However, they had a silent viewing where they had to guess the topic, as proposed by Jackson (1999). Watching the video with no sound can be considered as another form of advance organizer, which is in accordance with the study of Bransford & Johnson (1972) where the students have the context beforehand. Having the context before in form of a visual might have helped students in Class B to recall the context, and this might be part of the reason why they were in general more favorable to the *Chez Nous* video in the study. It is also possible that the required viewing of the video outside of class time might have contributed to better comprehension and thus to a more positive attitude towards the video in Class B. Another possibility is that Class A used a different type of organizer than Class B which might explain the difference in reaction. However, the researcher did not ask any questions regarding the

advance organizer and she does not have any concrete data to support her claims.

This study further demonstrated that the students in the three classes did not think they increased their vocabulary or learned grammatical structures while using the video. These results support a previous study done by White, Easton & Anderson (2000). Their study focused on video vs. print sources with distance learners. They found that students preferred their textbooks and study guides to learn vocabulary and grammatical structures and did not like the video in this respect. Moreover, a large majority of the students in Classes A and C did not find the video helpful in practicing their listening skills, pronunciation, or listening comprehension. However, they did play back the video when they did not understand the context. They understood the language spoken when they saw the visual expressions.

On the other hand, students in Class B agreed that the video helped them in all of the activities mentioned. In this instance, responses from Class B correspond with those in the study of White, Easton & Anderson (2000), in which the researchers found that video greatly helped students with listening, pronunciation, and the other mentioned issues. It was also interesting to see that the students in Class B felt that the video helped to enhance their listening skills (73%) and helped them understand the language spoken through visual cues (39%), as mentioned in previous studies by Secules, Herron & Tomasello (1992). Class B seemed to be different from the other classes as the students agreed with most of the positive benefits of the *Chez Nous* video. The reason might be

that the instructor of Class B has a different attitude about the video as she thinks the *Chez Nous* video to be a good tool and she uses it regularly in class and also encourages her students to watch the video in the video lab, this has possibly affected the students' attitude. It might also be due to the fact that the instructor gives assignments on a regular basis, and the students have to go to the video laboratory to work with the video on their own. Consequently, 50% of the students in Class B agreed that they practice listening comprehension and that through constant viewing of the video, they become more experienced working with the video. They have to try the different activities described above to be able to work on their assignments.

This study also supports earlier findings on learning about the target culture (Altman, 1989; Omaggio, 1986, 1993; Stempleski and Tomalin, 1990). Through video, L2 learners learn more about the language in relation to the way of life and traditions of native speakers of the language. According to Hammerly (1986), there are three subcategories of culture that learners should be aware of: informational, behavioral, and achievement. Informational culture is "information on the geography, history, heroes and villains" of that culture (Lafford and Lafford, 1997, p. 218). As for behavioral culture, it concerns the routines of the inhabitants of the culture. Achievement consists of the "artistic and literary achievements of a society" (Lafford and Lafford, 1997, p. 218). The *Chez Nous* video shows authentic situations and has several clips based on those three categories to enhance the cultural learning of the L2 learner and the learners perceived its usefulness for learning culture.

The students in the three classes also gave an affective evaluation of the video. Classes A and C did not seem to find the video enjoyable or relaxing; rather, they found it overwhelming. This might be due to the number of times they watched the video as compared to Class B. The instructors in Classes A and C showed the video two times on request of the researcher. However, learning a language is a dynamic process where there is constant change in the material. Learners always have to have strategies about using the material to be able to succeed. Namlu (2003) discovered that learners who have better learning strategies do not feel anxious when faced with hard-to-cope learning situations. This ability helps them to be more productive in their learning environment. The students in Class B seem to have developed their own strategies for watching the video by constantly going to the lab, thus allowing them to enjoy the video more.

Moreover, the students not finding the video interesting might be due to its content. Some of the clips in the *Chez Nous* video depict people going to work, sitting in a library or reading some books. The atmosphere seems serious, and this might be another reason why the students find the video overwhelming. One student said that it would be better if they could watch cartoons or kids videos as they are much more interesting. According to Horwitz and Young (1991), a high level of enjoyment ascribed to video permits a low-anxiety learning context, which is critical for effective language learning. The clips described in the section on methodology were not perceived as boring by the researcher; however, the students might feel differently about them. The clip in class A is

about kids in the suburbs, the clip in class B is taking place in a café/bar and the third clip is about food. Yet, the responses in Classes A and C are negative. Those students do not seem to like the video as they do not watch it as often as Class B and they find that the people were speaking too fast or using words they do not understand. This can create frustration, which in turn makes the video a high-anxiety learning material. Effective learning is unlikely to happen in this situation.

Based on Figure 16, the overall perception of the video was not very good. Students in Classes A and C did not find the video useful at all, while 22% of students in Class B agreed that the video was good on the whole. Students in Class B are the only ones who work more with the *Chez Nous* video. Yet, the video does not seem to have a very big impact on them. 45% of the students remained neutral while another 33% disagreed that the video was good. Even though they were more exposed to it, the students did not find it easy to watch an authentic video at a beginner-level, which might explain the high level of neutrality. Nearly half of the class remained neutral.

Furthermore, the instructors guide students through the video component. The instructors told the researcher that they think the *Chez Nous* video is rich in terms of cultural and sociolinguistic aspects. However, the instructors in Class A and C decided not to use that video, saying that it is too difficult for beginner-level students. From what the data suggests, it also shows that the students believe that the *Chez Nous* video is not contributing to a rich learning environment as it was too fast, too advanced, too outdated and too confusing.

Also as noted in the beginning of Chapter 4, there are several factors which contributed to the video being perceived as a good learning tool. Students in the three classes agreed that the video helped them learn about the culture, and the visuals allowed them to see non-verbal communication (Stempleski & Tomalin, 1990) where particular utterances were supported by an action or by body language (Baltova, 1994). The video was also seen as a good tool that helps practice the language through class discussions, and with the teachers' help, the students are able to understand the "real" language (Jackson, 1999). This study showed similar results to White's study (2000) since students in Class C found the video to be challenging. For instance, one student said, "It challenged me to try and pick out parts necessary to answer questions". Feeling challenged motivated the students to listen better. Students in Class A and B did not say anything about being challenged by the video.

This study also corroborates results from another study by Secules, Herron & Tomasello (1992). They found that the language can be easily lost when presented by means of video due to rapid speech rate and unfamiliar vocabulary. The students in the present study did not like the video because they found it too fast ("the people spoke too fast"), the video was too advanced for their level ("it was far above my listening and speaking ability"), the vocabulary was difficult ("I didn't know lots of the vocabulary"), it was confusing ("people mumble"), the sound quality was not good ("sound bad and amateur recording"), and it was outdated. All these drawbacks are not conducive to an effective learning session for beginners. It is clearly implied in Garza's (1996) study that

authentic materials are "superior" in terms of their content and pedagogical potential to any non-authentic materials. However, even though authentic materials are good, the learners are still at a beginner level. Garza (1996) acknowledges that the obvious disadvantage of using authentic materials is the limited control over the linguistic content. This has already been seen in the study as it was not easy for the students to understand the conversation. The students were confused as the speakers were speaking too fast and using "advanced vocabulary", and not being able to break down the segment of the clip was even more frustrating for them.

Furthermore, White, Easton & Anderson (2000) point out that Tuffs and Tudor (1990) said that video provides a more useful contextualization of language than any other aid since it represents complete communicative situations. Altman (1989) and Garza (1996) also add two important things that an authentic video brings: authentic oral language and the target culture. In the present study, when compared to other sources, the video was seen as key to bringing the target culture into the classroom ("real life experience of French culture"). The visual channel supported the context ("visual parts were helpful to guess what's going on"), and paralinguistic cues ("listening to different voices, styles and speed") helped students understand better in the classroom. Even though the students and the instructors did not like the *Chez Nous* video as it has authentic clips, I still believe that students are getting something from those authentic clips. The students agreed that they have learned more about the target culture. However, they need pedagogical support especially in listening

situations and some cues (auditory and visual) to help them in gaining other knowledge than just culture.

Students from the three classes were also asked about the number of languages they had studied. A few knew two or more foreign languages while the majority of them have never studied any foreign language. French was the first foreign language they were learning, and it was not easy to understand a video in a foreign language. People who know more than one language are usually considered to be better learners in other languages probably because they have learned the strategies that work best for them.

According to Gass and Selinker (2001), some researchers have found that multilinguals are better learners than monolinguals. Klein (1995), for example, compared people who were monolinguals and learned English as an L2 with multilinguals who learned English as a third or fourth language. In her study, she found out that multilinguals did much better than monolinguals in terms of lexical and syntactic learning. A similar tendency can be observed in the present study: some of the students who had more than two languages were the ones who found the video helpful. However, there are always exceptions and I found some in Classes A and C. Of the 7 students in Class A and 8 students in Class C who had learned another language before, 3 in Class A and 2 in Class C did not like the video at all. The numbers are quite insignificant in Class C while nearly half of those students in Class A disagreed finding the video helpful. This may be a sign of other factors that came into play which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This study has examined the perception of students in three French beginning language classes using the *Chez Nous* video which is part of their curriculum. The analysis of this data demonstrates that the *Chez Nous* video is largely perceived as a negative resource in these language classrooms. This chapter discusses possible pedagogical implications and limitations of the results of the study. As well, the researcher suggests future areas of research that would contribute to a better understanding of the perception of L2 learners using the *Chez Nous* video.

5.1 Summary of results

The results from this study provide us with a better understanding of the way the L2 learners feel about using the *Chez Nous* video. We have seen a couple of factors that likely influenced the perception of the students while they had to deal with the video. The advance organizer was seen as useful in Class B whereas this was not the case in Class A. No advance organizer was used in Class C. The listening comprehension and visual cues helped students in Class B as they were the only ones to go to the video lab frequently. They also found the video more interesting than the other classes. The way the video was implemented and used in Class B might be a factor.

There was positive feedback regarding learning about culture as the students from the three classes agreed that the video provided them with a glimpse of the target culture. They also thought that visual cues and

paralinguistic cues facilitated the viewing of the *Chez Nous* video. From what the data suggests, students from the three classes do not appear to like the *Chez Nous* video. Only 22% in Class B agreed that it was good, while all the other students in Class B either disagreed or remained neutral. It was also found that some students who knew more than one language perceived the video as a helpful tool.

5.2 Pedagogical implications

The instructors in Classes A and C found the video to be overly difficult and highly inappropriate for a beginning-level course. One of the instructors said, "I find the sound quality to be terrible as it was not filmed in a sound studio, but on the streets, and there is minimal control for language level/content due to the numerous interviews with native speakers". The instructors also acknowledged that the students know that they feel this material to be inappropriate and poorly developed. Knowing that their instructors do not like the material and do not find it appropriate is a serious problem, and this might likely influence the students' perception. One student said that seeing (watching) the video is not worthwhile as the viewer will be sorry. This shows that the students are not even interested in watching the video which is on the syllabus. They also said that it was a waste of precious class time.

Nonetheless, the instructors are not to be blamed as the decision to use a specific video depends on the program or the institution. Maybe, these instructors need more training on how to show a video effectively. They get the

Chez Nous video and have the responsibility to use it. Some use it, while others do not. To compensate for the lack of use of the *Chez Nous* video, the instructors use another video series *Mais Ouil, 1996* (Thompson, C.P, Phillips, E.M) in class as this one is not difficult and the speakers speak very slowly. This video consists of simulated "authentic" material and is able to ease the learner's comprehension process (Porter and Roberts, 1987). The authors also said that the learners' abilities improved from exposure to this simulated "authentic" video, and it seems only logical to argue that this type of video is important alongside authentic videos. Although the simulated "authentic" video does not contain as much culturally authentic information, the instructors seem to like it as it helps the learners improve their listening comprehension and have a better understanding of the passage when compared to the *Chez Nous* video.

On the other hand, the instructor of Class B also thinks the video to be difficult; however, she believes the *Chez Nous* video to be very good in terms of authenticity. She encourages the students to watch the video in the laboratory. The students are aware that the instructor likes the authenticity in the video. According to Altman (1989), an instructor brings energy to a class and it depends on him or her to make learning a success (Lonergan, 1984). The instructor in Class B does not proclaim that the video is a huge success among her students, yet they did like it to some extent as most of the positive responses came from that class.

I believe that the teachers' attitude played an important role in this study. This could likely be the root of some of the negative responses in Classes A and

C. I wonder what the responses would be if the instructors kept a positive attitude towards the video and somehow encouraged the students to watch it more often in the video laboratory. Those instructors further told the researcher that they are looking forward to having the *Chez Nous* video cancelled from the program and replaced by some simulated "authentic" video. Given that the data provided evidence that students (Class B) can benefit according to their own perception from the *Chez Nous* video, it seems only reasonable to suggest that the instructors be more patient with the material and provide students with the required amount of viewing. It would be better to try using the material as not showing the video does not help us know what the students can gain from the *Chez Nous* video.

As previously mentioned, the *Chez Nous* video has authentic clips and everyone seems to find it difficult. I believe that authentic materials should be more accessible to the learners. If the *Chez Nous* video is really an inappropriate tool, then it is better to change it, if this is possible. Also, particular attention should be taken with the way a video is recorded. The main complaints against the *Chez Nous* video were that the sound quality was bad and that it was too fast, too advanced and confusing. The alternative is to try to record inside of a building or if it is outside then in places that are not too noisy. Background noise might be the major problem in authentic videos as it prevents the learner from hearing the speaker properly. The noise can also make learners lose their concentration and render any attempt to listen to the foreign language futile.

Moreover, many students expressed the need to have subtitles to help them. Maybe if they had them, my findings would be more positive. They would have understood the content of the video. However, we do not know to what extent this would have helped the students. According to Baltova (1994), students who are exposed to L2 subtitled video are more positive and confident that the subtitles help them to learn, as compared to those exposed to regular (unsubtitled) video. Borras and Lafayette (1994) also concluded that the use of subtitles "may help the foreign/ L2 learner associate the aural and written forms of words more easily and quickly than video without subtitles" (qtd in Salaberry, 2001). Maybe another study on the *Chez Nous* video with subtitles should be undertaken to see if it has the desired effect on the learner.

Proficiency level is another factor that came into play. If the student is proficient in the target language, he or she will be quick to understand the video sequence. He or she might hear some vocabulary and will try to match it with what he or she has learned in the classroom. According to Cohen (1998, p.5), those learners have certain learning strategies that include

> strategies for identifying the material that needs to be learned, distinguishing it from other material if need be, grouping it for easier learning (e.g., grouping vocabulary by category into nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and so forth), having repeated contact with the material (e.g., through classroom tasks or the completion of homework assignments), and formally committing the material to memory when it does not seem to be acquired naturally (whether through rote memory

techniques such as repetition, the use of mnemonics, or some other memory technique).

(qtd. in Gass and Selinker, 2001, p. 365)

However, students with lower proficiency might not know what kind of strategies they should use to understand the video, and this can create frustration. It is questionable whether changing the videotape would be beneficial for the language learners because the latter might perceive the video the same way as the previous one. In such a situation, evaluation procedures and supervision of the video would be challenging, and some learners might have difficulty adapting to the videotape. Regardless of the level of difficulty, ways should be developed to help students watch the video and also help them expand their note-taking cues while watching.

Nonetheless, if instructors do not have the choice of replacing a different authentic video, even more care should be taken in providing sound pedagogical training for the teachers so that they can facilitate the video watching for their students. For example, the instructors could start by giving some difficult vocabulary to the students preceding the video sequence. Use short segments whose content can be easily replayed and readily absorbed by the entire class. Then give a silent viewing of the video. This will help the learners predict the topic and the content of the video. The instructor should also be ready to stop the video and check comprehension; replay if needed to allow even the weakest learner to move from viewing to listening. Encourage the students to pay particular attention to the behavior of the characters. Assign specific tasks that

encourage students to become active listeners and take risks in guessing the meaning from the visual and verbal context. The instructor should maintain a positive attitude throughout the viewing process and remain aware of student comprehension levels.

Also, attempts need to be made to alter learners' negative perceptions towards the video. Students in the three classes need to be exposed to other language classes where the video component is used. They might discover that students in those classes also find their video difficult; however, they might have some positive things to say. Being in a community outside of their own class might make students realize that they are not alone in their struggle and that these difficulties actually form part of learning a language.

Besides, we need to consider the learners' attitudes, motivations, and expectations about language learning. Learners need to realize that learning a foreign language does not consist of acquiring only vocabulary and grammar. They should open up to the culture and understand what sort of language, vocabulary, register and style is appropriate in a given situation. The use of video is imperative as it shows students the different contexts of using the language. Therefore, through exposure to a variety of videos, students become aware of other aspects of the target language which might not have been possible with other sources.

5.3 Limitations

One aspect of the questionnaire that bothered me a lot was the "Neutral" section. Students have filled this section very often, perhaps because they were undecided. I would have preferred to get an opinion in order to be able to compare the answers. This was possible to a lesser extent as staying neutral does not help the researcher to get a good idea of what the learner really felt. It was thus difficult to understand the perceptions of some students. Maybe, it would have been better to remove the "Neutral" option and offer the participants only four options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree and Strongly Agree.

In addition, I should have given the instructors some instructions on how to show the *Chez Nous* video. They were free to work with the video the way they usually do. However, to have more control over the survey, I should have told them to use specific clips with specific questions. The treatment would have been more similar in the three classes.

It would also have been beneficial to observe the classes when the video was shown to see how the instructor presented the video and how the students reacted to it. This would have provided more detailed information on the process instead of having to rely on the instructors' account of what had happened. This is also important because Class B reacted differently from Class A and C. Nonetheless, leaving the choice up to the instructors actually helped me learn more about the various ways they use the video. As previously indicated, this gave me a better insight into the different factors that influenced the perceptions of the students while watching the *Chez Nous* video.

5.4 Future research

Second language learners were the principal participants in this study since the purpose was to understand their perception of the use of the *Chez Nous* video. In the future, it would be interesting to investigate other beginner-level language classes that use the same video for the entire semester, not just once or twice and compare them. This might help coordinators of language courses be more informed about the perception of their learners.

It would also be good to explore which type of video works well with the students at a beginner level. Is an authentic video or a simulated "authentic" video better perceived? However, both videos should be presented as a great learning tool to the students and should be used to an equal extent. For instance, one class could use an authentic video and the other class a simulated "authentic" video. At the end of the semester, the students' comprehension and cultural knowledge of both videos would be tested to determine possible improvements. Students should also be asked about their perceptions. Will students who are used to the authentic video find the simulated "authentic" video easy or difficult? My hypothesis is that they will find the simulated "authentic" video easier and will also gain more cultural knowledge than the other class. However, only a study can show that.

5.5 Reflections

Upon completion of this study, it became clear to me that I have begun to touch on a topic that is really quite broad. Measuring students' perceptions is not

easy as many things can influence that perception. My study was based only on the perception of students from three second semester French language courses at one university using the *Chez Nous* video. In the course of this study, many new ideas came to my attention. For instance, I could have done a more detailed study by comparing the *Chez Nous* video and the *Mais Oui* video. Doing this might have given me a better idea of how the students feel about the two videos in comparison. However, I soon realized that less than a year is not sufficient time to conduct a more in-depth study when there is little previous information on the subject matter. Hopefully this research will shed some more light on the discussed issues for those who may continue this kind of research and allow them to gain a better foothold on the topic.

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Appendix B: Questionnaire

Please use the following scale to answer question 1 to 14.

SD=Strongly Disagree D=Disagree N=Neutral A=Agree SA=Strongly Agree

	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. The video helped me increase my French vocabulary.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The video helped me to learn the grammatical structures of French.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The video helped me to learn the culture of the target language.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The video helped me improve my listening skills in French.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The video helped me improve my pronunciation of French.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The video helped me to learn idiomatic expressions in French.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I used the video to practice for the listening comprehension exam.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I played back parts that I don't understand.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I understood the content of the video when I saw the visual setting.	1	2	3	4	5
10.I understood the language spoken when I saw the visual expressions.	1	2	3	4	5
11. The video helped me to remember the story line.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Hearing the language spoken helped me remember the vocabulary.	1	2	3	4	5
13. The video was:					
a) Enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5
b) Relaxing	1	2	3	4	5
c) Satisfying	1	2	3	4	5
d) Stimulating	1	2	3	4	5
e) Interesting	1	2	3	4	5
f) Overwhelming	1	2	3	4	5
g) Too fast to understand	1	2	3	4	5
h) Vocabulary too difficult	1	2	3	4	5
i) Confusing	1	2	3	4	5
14. Overall, the video was an excellent tool to help me learn French.	1	2	3	4	5

15. What did you like most about the video as a learning tool?

.....

.....

.....

16. What didn't you like about the video as a learning tool?

.....

.....

.....

17. What did you learn from the video which is less easy to learn from other sources (e.g., textbook, audio CD, webpages)?

.....

.....

.....

18. Is there anything that needed to change on the video (do not refer to the content)? Can you elaborate?

.....

.....

.....

19. Did you have any other comments on the video?

.....

.....

.....

20. Have you learned a foreign language before? If yes, which one?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Appendix C: Video Exercise: Class A

University of Alberta MLCS Fren 112

CHAPITRE 8 :

Nous sommes chez nous. CLIP 8.1 : Les gamins des banlieues

AVANT DE REGARDER

1. **Discutons.** L'expression "grande ville" évoque, pour vous, quelles images?

Faites une petite liste. Est-ce que les images sur votre liste sont plutôt positives ou négatives?

EN REGARDANT

2. Où se passe l'action du clip?

_____

3. Quelle(s) sorte(s) de personnes parlent dans le clip?

_____

4. Quel est le sujet général de leurs opinions?

_____

5. Selon le jeune garçon, quelles sont les choses nécessaires à la vie en ville?

_____

6. Pourquoi est-ce que la jeune fille blonde veut habiter à la campagne?

_____

7. Dans son opinion, pourquoi est-ce que beaucoup de personnes restent en ville?

_____

APRÈS AVOIR REGARDÉ

8. **Donnez vos réactions.** Comment est-ce que vous imaginez la vie des jeunes garçons et filles de la banlieue parisienne? Expliquez par des détails que vous avez notés dans le clip.

_____

_____

_____

Appendix D: Video Exercise: Class B

University of Alberta MLCS Fren 112

Chapitre 7:

Nous sommes chez nous. CLIP 7.1 : Un petit blanc, s'il vous plait

EN REGARDANT

1. **Regardez bien !** Comment s'appelle ce café/bar ?

_____

2. Qu'est-ce qui est servi ? Regardez bien et indiquez les boissons qui sont servies.

_____ un verre de vin
_____ du lait
_____ une limonade
_____ un jus d'orange
_____ un coca
_____ de la bière
_____ un café
_____ de l'eau minéral

EN ECOUTANT

3. Que voudrait le premier homme ? Un petit ou un grand ?

4. Que voudrait la dame dans son café ?

5. Que voudrait l'homme qui parle au serveur après la dame ?

Appendix E: Video Exercise: Class C

University of Alberta MLCS Fren 112

Chapitre 7 :

Nous sommes chez nous. CLIP 7.2 : Les différents types de repas

EN REGARDANT/ APRÈS AVOIR REGARDÉ

1. À quelle heure la plupart des Français s'arrêtent pour prendre un vrai repas ?
2. Quel est le plat favori des Français ?
3. Pourquoi les femmes font-elles attention à ce qu'elles mangent ?
4. Quel est l'avantage de la cuisine chinoise?

Appendix F: Data: Class A

Participants: 22

Responses are given in percentages and the numbers in square brackets indicate raw numbers of student responses.

		SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %
1	The video helped to increase French vocabulary	45 [10]	23 [5]	32 [7]		
2	The video helped to learn the grammatical structures of French	50 [11]	32 [7]	9 [2]	9 [2]	
3	The video helped to learn the culture of the target language	5 [1]	18 [4]	18 [4]	59 [13]	
4	The video helped to improve my listening skills in French	23 [5]	36 [8]	9 [2]	32 [7]	
5	The video helped to improve my pronunciation of French	50 [11]	18 [4]	23 [5]	9 [2]	
6	The video helped to learn idiomatic expressions in French	41 [9]	32 [7]	23 [5]	4 [1]	
7	Used the video to practice for the listening comprehension exam	64 [14]		27 [6]	9 [2]	
8	Played back parts that don't understand	23 [5]	14 [3]	18 [4]	27 [6]	18 [4]
9	Understood the content of the video when saw the visual setting		18 [4]	36 [8]	46 [10]	
10	Understood the language spoken when saw the visual expressions	14 [3]	36 [8]	32 [7]	18 [4]	

11	The video helped to remember the story line	18 [4]	32 [7]	27 [6]	23 [5]	
12	Hearing the language spoken helped to remember the vocabulary	41 [9]	32 [7]	18 [4]	9 [2]	
13	**The video was:**					
	a. Enjoyable	45 [10]	18 [4]	23 [5]	14 [3]	
	b. Relaxing	59 [13]	18 [4]	14 [3]	9 [2]	
	c. Satisfying	55 [12]	18 [4]	27 [6]		
	d. Stimulating	27 [6]	27 [6]	41 [9]	5 [1]	
	e. Interesting	27 [6]	14 [3]	32 [7]	27 [6]	
	f. Overwhelming		5 [1]	5 [1]	32 [7]	58 [13]
	g. Too fast to understand			5 [1]	14 [3]	81 [18]
	h. Vocabulary too difficult			14 [3]	27 [6]	59 [13]
	i. Confusing			14 [3]	32 [7]	54 [12]
14	Overall, the video was an excellent tool to learn French	54 [12]	32 [7]	14 [3]		

Appendix G: Data: Class B

Participants: 18

Responses are given in percentages and the numbers in square brackets indicate raw numbers of student responses.

		SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %
1	The video helped to increase French vocabulary	22 [4]	45 [8]	22 [4]	11 [2]	
2	The video helped to learn the grammatical structures of French	22 [4]	44 [8]	28 [5]	6 [1]	
3	The video helped to learn the culture of the target language	6 [1]	11 [2]	17 [3]	44 [8]	22 [4]
4	The video helped to improve my listening skills in French	6 [1]		21 [4]	67 [12]	6 [1]
5	The video helped to improve my pronunciation of French	11 [2]	28 [5]	22 [4]	33 [6]	6 [1]
6	The video helped to learn idiomatic expressions in French	28 [5]	39 [7]	33 [6]		
7	Used the video to practice for the listening comprehension exam	17 [3]	22 [4]	11 [2]	44 [8]	6 [1]
8	Played back parts that don't understand	17 [3]	11 [2]	22 [4]	50 [9]	
9	Understood the content of the video when saw the visual setting		6 [1]	39 [7]	44 [8]	11 [2]
10	Understood the language spoken when saw the visual expressions		22 [4]	39 [7]	28 [5]	11 [2]

11	The video helped to remember the story line	6 [1]	11 [2]	28 [5]	55 [10]	
12	Hearing the language spoken helped to remember the vocabulary.	6 [1]	38 [7]	17 [3]	33 [6]	6 [1]
13	**The video was:**					
	a. Enjoyable		11 [2]	44 [8]	39 [7]	6 [1]
	b. Relaxing	17 [3]	33 [6]	28 [5]	22 [4]	
	c. Satisfying	11 [2]	39 [7]	33 [6]	17 [3]	
	d. Stimulating		17 [3]	44 [8]	39 [7]	
	e. Interesting	11 [2]	11 [2]	33 [6]	45 [8]	
	f. Overwhelming		17 [3]	33 [6]	22 [4]	28 [5]
	g. Too fast to understand			17 [3]	33 [6]	50 [9]
	h. Vocabulary too difficult		17 [3]	33 [6]	33 [6]	17 [3]
	i. Confusing		17 [3]	28 [5]	33 [6]	22 [4]
14	Overall, the video was an excellent tool to learn French	11 [2]	22 [4]	45 [8]	22 [4]	

Appendix H: Data: Class C

Participants: 23

Responses are given in percentages and the numbers in square brackets indicate raw numbers of student responses.

		SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %
1	The video helped to increase French vocabulary	26 [6]	35 [8]	17 [4]	22 [5]	
2	The video helped to learn the grammatical structures of French	43 [10]	48 [11]	9 [2]		
3	The video helped to learn the culture of the target language	13 [3]	22 [5]	22 [5]	30 [7]	13 [3]
4	The video helped to improve my listening skills in French	13 [3]	13 [3]	35 [8]	35 [8]	4 [1]
5	The video helped to improve my pronunciation of French	22 [5]	22 [5]	47 [11]	9 [2]	
6	The video helped to learn idiomatic expressions in French	52 [12]	30 [7]	13 [3]	5 [1]	
7	Used the video to practice for the listening comprehension exam	61 [14]	22 [5]	9 [2]	4 [1]	4 [1]
8	Played back parts that don't understand	26 [6]	9 [2]	30 [7]	30 [7]	5 [1]
9	Understood the content of the video when saw the visual setting	9 [2]	30 [7]	4 [1]	57 [13]	
10	Understood the language spoken when saw the visual expressions	17 [4]	39 [9]	35 [8]	9 [2]	

11	The video helped to remember the story line	17 [4]	26 [6]	26 [6]	22 [5]	9NR [2]
12	Hearing the language spoken helped to remember the vocabulary	22 [5]	52 [12]	22 [5]	4 [1]	
13	**The video was:**					
	a. Enjoyable	43 [10]	17 [4]	35 [8]	5 [1]	
	b. Relaxing	52 [12]	39 [9]	4 [1]	5 [1]	
	c. Satisfying	48 [11]	26 [6]	17 [4]	9 [2]	
	d. Stimulating	26 [6]	22 [5]	26 [6]	17 [4]	9 [2]
	e. Interesting	26 [6]	4 [1]	35 [8]	35 [8]	
	f. Overwhelming	4 [1]		9 [2]	17 [4]	70 [16]
	g. Too fast to understand	4 [1]			9 [2]	87 [20]
	h. Vocabulary too difficult	4 [1]	4 [1]	5 [1]	30 [7]	57 [13]
	i. Confusing	4 [1]	5 [1]	9 [2]	30 [7]	52 [12]
14	Overall, the video was an excellent tool to learn French	43 [10]	39 [9]	18 [4]		